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The Mounted Police On Canada's Northern Frontier, 1895-1940

William Robert Morrison

THE MOUNTED POLICE ON CANADA'S NORTHERN FRONTIER, 1895-1940

by

William Robert Morrison

Department of History

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ABSTRACT

The North-West Mounted Police, established in 1873 to ensure the peaceful absorption into Canada of her new western territories, found itself at the turn of the century charged with the mission of asserting effective control over Canada's northern frontier. Between 1895 and 1940 the Mounted Police penetrated five separate regions of the Canadian Arctic and sub-Arctic. These were the Yukon, the Mackenzie Delta, the west coast of Hudson Bay, the Arctic coast, and the Arctic islands. Each area posed a particular physical and social challenge to the force, and each was met with intelligence, energy, and perseverance.

The police, as the voice and arm of the federal government on the northern frontier, had as their primary duties the assertion of Canadian sovereignty, and the establishment and maintenance of law and order. They also provided almost the entire range of government civil services to the frontier.

The police performed their diverse tasks with varying degrees of enthusiasm. The force had a strongly defined conception of its proper role; it was to catch criminals and to maintain the law. The police therefore sometimes chafed when they found themselves cast in the role of minor civil servants. Yet despite some occasional failures and derelictions of duty, the jobs which the police disliked

were done well, while those they found to their taste could have been done no better.

A study of the role of the police in these northern areas provides more than just a picture of this remarkable body of men; it gives insight into the entire history of the north during the period under consideration. The police, in the performance of their duties, dealt with miners, missionaries, traders, whalers, and especially with the native people; their history thus reveals much of significance about these other groups and their operations as well.

The question of the way in which the northern frontier of Canada was first brought into the mainstream of Canadian life can be answered largely by reference to the early activities of the Mounted Police in those northern regions. Why, how, and how well this process was accomplished are the questions raised and answered in this dissertation.

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A NOTE ON SOURCES

The greater part of the research leading to this dissertation is based on the papers of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police in the Public Archives of Canada (PAC), on other collections in the Archives, and on the published annual reports of the police. In order to prevent needless repetition in the footnotes, a shortened form of reference to these papers has been adopted here, as follows:

"Compt. Corr." refers to R.C.M.P. Papers, Comptroller's Office, Official Correspondence Series, 1874-1919, PAC, RG 18, A-1.

"Compt. Lbks." refers to R.C.M.P. Papers, Comptroller's Office, Letterbooks, 1883-1919, PAC, RG 18, A-2.

"Compt. Misc." refers to R.C.M.P. Papers, Comptroller's Office, Miscellaneous Subject Files, 1919-1921, PAC, RG 18, A-5.

"Comm. Corr." refers to R.C.M.P. Papers, Commissioner's Office, Official Correspondence Series, 1876-1920, PAC, RG 18, B-1.

"Comm. Files" refers to R.C.M.P. Papers, Commissioner's Office, Subject Files, Correspondence, 1897-1919, PAC, RG 18, B-2.

"Comm. Lbks." refers to R.C.M.P. Papers, Commissioner's Office, Letterbooks, 1873-1904, PAC, RG 18, B-3.

"Comm. Orders" refers to R.C.M.P. Papers, Commissioner's Office, Orders and Regulations, 1880-1954, PAC, RG 18, B-4.

"Diaries, BP" refers to R.C.M.P. Papers, Division and Detachment Records, Bache Peninsula Detachment, 1926-1932, PAC, RG 18, C-10.

"Dawson Lbks." refers to R.C.M.P. Papers, Yukon Records, Dawson City Letterbooks, 1899-1905, PAC, RG 18, D-1.

"Yukon Ord." refers to R.C.M.P. Papers, Yukon Records, General Yukon Orders, 1898-1910, PAC, RG 18, D-2.

"Yukon Jnls." refers to R.C.M.P. Papers, Yukon Records, Daily Journals, 1898-1920, PAC, RG 18, D-3.

"Yukon Misc." refers to R.C.M.P. Papers, Yukon Records, Miscellaneous, 1898-1951, PAC, RG 18, D-4.

"Int. NWT Corr." refers to Department of the Interior Papers, Northwest Territories Correspondence, PAC, RG 15, B-1a.

"Int. NAB" refers to Department of the Interior, Northern Administration Branch Papers, PAC, RG 85.

"YT Rec." refers to Yukon Territorial Records, PAC, RG 91.

"Ogilvie Papers" refers to the William Ogilvie Papers, PAC, MG 30, C-2.

"Harkin Papers" refers to the J.B. Harkin Papers, PAC, MG 30, C-63.

"Craig Papers" refers to the J.D. Craig Papers, PAC, MG 30, C-65.

"Constantine Papers" refers to the Charles Constantine Papers, PAC, MG 30, E-2.

"R.N.W.M.P. Report 1907" refers to the police report for the fiscal year ending in 1907, published as a Government of Canada Sessional Paper in 1908, and similarly for other years.

These are the sources most frequently cited in this dissertation; others are given in full. The word "sic" has been used sparingly in this work; it may be assumed that all quoted material accurately copies the original.

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The writer has set himself the task of examining, within a certain period of time and within certain arbitrary geographical limits, the roles played by the Royal Canadian Mounted Police, under its various titles, in the development of the northern frontier of Canada. The words "Mounted Police" have traditionally conjured up in the minds of Canadians and others an image which is more romantic than scholarly; one might think, therefore, that the police are a subject fit more for melodrama than for a dissertation. In reality the Mounted Police have always played a serious, often vital role in Canadian history, and nowhere more truly so than in the history of Canada's northern frontier.

It is the writer's thesis that the work of the police in the Canadian north between 1895 and 1940 was an important factor in its history and development; that without the presence of the police this development might have taken a different course; that the police were the main factor in bringing that part of Canada within the orbit of government control, and were almost solely responsible for the peaceful nature of that process. Finally, an examination of the work of the police in the area reveals much of significance about the R.C.M.P. and the effect the north had on it, about Canadian attitudes towards the north--especially official ones--and about northern development in general.

The development of the northern frontier, bringing with it the question of Arctic sovereignty, is currently a topic much in the public eye. It is therefore appropriate to examine the processes by which Canada established an effective control over this vast territory. The dual questions of sovereignty, which is essentially a legal one, and of control, which is a practical one, are important to this dissertation. The police in only a few instances were the direct agents of Canadian sovereignty in the north--Ellesmere Island is a case in point--but in many places they were the agents of government control. This was not their only function in the north, but it was one which seems particularly relevant today.

The years around the turn of the century were demonstrably crucial in the history of Canada's north.[1] It was the period in which the Canadian government took notice of the Arctic regions, almost for the first time, and for the first time took positive action there, not only to establish its authority, but to bring to this vast region the mixed blessings of government services and control. Thus the Yukon was transformed in the space of six years from an almost empty land into a territory with a metropolitan centre, with laws, a post office, a telegraph system, and the numerous paraphernalia of early twentieth century civilization. The Mounted Police brought much of this to the north, and what they did not actually control, they

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1 The limits of this dissertation as to geography and period are defined below.

kept a very close watch over. So closely involved were the police with the Yukon that studying the history of the territory without including them would give almost as distorted a picture as studying it without the miners themselves.

In the western Arctic and Hudson Bay regions, the work of the police, though perhaps not as crucial to the development of these areas as was the case in the Yukon, was nonetheless highly important. The arrival of the police in these two regions in 1903 marked a turning point in their modern history--the era, in our day well advanced, in which they became increasingly tied to the government in Ottawa. It was the beginning of the end of the unregulated north, in which the natives and whites alike had done much as they pleased, and the start of the contemporary era of government control. The work of the police was vital to this transformation, since they, as the chief agents of the central government, were largely responsible for carrying it out. In the far north, the Arctic coast and the islands, this is even more true.

This thesis further proposes that without the presence of the Mounted Police, the history of the north might have been quite different. Historical "ifs" are always hard to evaluate, but evidence will be given to show that the appearance of the police on Canada's northern frontier marked the first establishment of effective Canadian control over a wide area. One of the many services which the police per-

formed in the Yukon was to demonstrate beyond any doubt that the goldfields would be peaceful and under the unquestioned authority of the central government. Had the police not been present, it is not impossible that the Yukon might have sunk into semi-anarchy, in the style of California, fifty years earlier. It is also possible that without the police, Canada's actual title to the area might have come under serious question.

Farther to the north and east the threat to Canadian sovereignty was less acute, and the role of the police in this respect tended to be more symbolic. Had the police not penetrated the western Arctic and Hudson Bay just after the turn of the century, the result would likely have been a continuation of the power vacuum which existed there. In the high Arctic, however, an area which the police penetrated after 1920, Canadian sovereignty was by no means certain, especially in the area of the Sverdrup Islands and Ellesmere Island. The presence of the police in this area was more than symbolic; given the questionable claims of Canada to the region, it was of the highest importance.

The police were the main agents of the regularization of the northern frontier, changing it from a largely unregulated society to one which operated, in theory and increasingly in fact, under much the same rules and terms as the rest of the country. This change was effected both by enforcement of the laws, and by the performance of a wide variety of other public services. This dissertation

will show to what extent the police, in effecting this change, were the agents of conscious government policy, what determined this policy, and how the police interpreted it in the performance of their duties.

The relations between the police and the native peoples, and between the police and the white residents of the north will also be examined. The police had a marked effect on the native way of life; the suppression of the liquor traffic is by no means the only example. And what is less well known, the natives, especially the Eskimos, made an impression on the police as well. All this was part of the development of the northern frontier.

The idea of basing a dissertation on the work of the Mounted Police[1] might seem a hackneyed one, for a great many books have been written on the police in the last seventy years, some of them interesting and accurate. But the scholarly research which has been done on the police has not been exhaustive, and their role in the development of the northern frontier has not yet been adequately investigated. The annual reports of the police for the period under consideration, published as government sessional papers, are in themselves very full, and general writers on the subject, understandably, have chosen not to investigate

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1 The terms "police," "Mounted Police," "North-West Mounted Police" (N.W.M.P.), "Royal North-West Mounted Police" (R.N.W.M.P.), and "Royal Canadian Mounted Police" (R.C.M.P.), are all used in this work when speaking of this organization. The first two are used indiscriminately, the third is used for the pre-1904 period, the fourth for the years 1904-1919, and the fifth for the post-1919 period.

the enormous correspondence files which make up the bulk of the police papers in the Public Archives of Canada; these are essential to a complete understanding of the topic. The books which have been written to date on the Mounted Police have been based chiefly on personal reminiscences, or a perusal of the published reports, or sometimes on simple hearsay and the writer's imagination. A study of the actual documents and correspondence, along with the traditional material relating to the role of the police in the north, will provide, it is hoped, a more complete picture of this aspect of Canadian history.

The phrase "Canada's Northern Frontier" is somewhat vague, and must be defined. "Arctic" might have been a better adjective, for most of the area to be examined is in the Arctic and sub-Arctic regions of the country. A more precise definition of the area involved would be those northern regions which were penetrated for the first time by the police during the four decades after 1895. This includes areas as far apart as York Factory, the mouth of the Coppermine River, Ellesmere Island, and parts of north-western British Columbia. To keep the dissertation within reasonable limits, some of the more southerly parts of the "north," in particular the Athabasca country, have been left out; the challenge to the police posed there was of a different nature than farther to the north. The years 1895 to 1940 cover the period between the first involvement of the police in the Yukon and the approximate date when

the federal government began to assume its present active role in northern affairs, relieving the police of many of their former responsibilities.

The work of the Mounted Police affords a very good insight into the development of the northern Canadian frontier around the turn of the century and after. The police were involved in virtually every aspect of life on the frontier, from simple policing to exploration and civil administration. To examine the role of the police is thus to examine aspects of much of the spectrum of northern activity during this period.[1] In looking at this spectrum, an approach which is partly regional and partly chronological will be employed. Five main areas of emphasis, each of which posed a distinct challenge to the police, will be dealt with separately. These are: the Yukon, the Mackenzie Delta, Hudson Bay, the Arctic coast, and the Arctic islands. When dealing with each region, the emphasis will of course be on the police, and all aspects of northern development, whether concerned with traders, native peoples, explorers, government, or whatever, will be considered chiefly as they relate to them. The main point of the dissertation, then, is to discover how, why, where, and to what extent the Mounted Police contributed to the history and development of Canada's northern frontier.

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1 The principal exception is religious activity in the north, from which the police generally kept aloof. They had a fair amount to do with the region's commercial activities.

It remains to explain some features of the organization of the Mounted Police which pertain to this activity. The word most often used to describe the original North-West Mounted Police, established in 1873, has been "semi-military."[1] The word suggests that the force was not to be an ordinary body of police. It is true that the N.W.M.P. developed into a police force unique in Canada because of its size, functions, and organization. But at its inception there existed models for it. The Royal Irish Constabulary, which was in part an inspiration for the N.W.M.P., was just as military if not more so.[2] Furthermore, the most distinguishing characteristic of the force, despite the traditions of writers on the subject, was not its semi-military nature, which really expressed itself in non-essentials. It is true that the N.W.M.P. was full of ex-military men and at first used military titles for its ranks--major, colonel, and so forth--although this system was soon superseded by the present nomenclature. Moreover, the members of the force, like soldiers, were in theory and often in practice on duty twenty-four hours a day. It is true that

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1 For example, R.C. Fetherstonhaugh, The Royal Canadian Mounted Police, (New York, 1940), p. 3.

2 For an account of the genesis of the force, see S.W. Horrall, "Sir John A. Macdonald and the Mounted Police Force for the Northwest Territories", Canadian Historical Review, LIII, no. 2, June 1972. Macdonald in 1870 asked Sir John Rose for information on the Royal Irish Constabulary (op. cit., p. 182). In 1880 the Commissioner of the N.W.M.P. visited Ireland to study the force at first hand. (N.W.M.P. Report 1880, p. 3).

the N.W.M.P. was provided with artillery. But the quality which most distinguished the force from ordinary police also distinguished it from the army. This quality was versatility. As this work will point out at length, the whole raison d'être of the Mounted Police was that they should be able to turn their hands to whatever task, however prosaic or bizarre, that the government should lay before them. Their ability to do so made them quite different from the ordinary soldier.

There is, moreover, a better adjective to describe the police, one which also uses the prefix "semi-"--it is "semi-political." The political nature of the police is crucial to an understanding of their role in the development of the Canadian north.[1] They were political in two ways. In a limited sense their daily operations were influenced to some extent by political considerations. Commissioned officers in the force, for instance, not infrequently owed their commissions, or so it was thought, to their political allegiance. This is not to say that they were political hacks, or that they used their positions for political ends; it is merely to point out that many of them were staunch Conservatives or Liberals, and more to the point, were known as such, and were appointed partly for this reason. Supplying the police was part of the

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1 R.C. MacLeod, "The North-West Mounted Police, 1873-1905: Law Enforcement and the Social Order in the Canadian North-West," (unpublished Ph.D. thesis, Duke University, 1971), deals at considerable length with the political nature of the force.

part of the normal sphere of government patronage. As well, the Mounted Police, like any branch of the civil service, tended to be drawn into political brawls more or less as innocent bystanders. The so-called "Yukon scandals" of the turn of the century were a case in point. The Conservative opposition of that era in attempting to prove that the government was administering the Yukon in a corrupt and partisan manner, subjected the police to a fair amount of peripheral criticism, especially because the chief target of the attack, the former Commissioner of the Yukon, a strong Liberal, was an ex-officer of the force.[1] These political connections are, however, of secondary importance. What really mattered was the larger political role of the police as the agents of government policy in regard to the unsettled parts of the Dominion. From the inception of the force throughout the entire period covered by this study this aspect of police duty was paramount. To put it at its simplest, the N.W.M.P. was conceived and functioned as the regulatory force behind the establishment of Canadian sovereignty over the North-West Territories, and later, over the far north as well.

Initially, the police served as one of the foundations upon which rested Sir John A. Macdonald's "National Policy." Macdonald desired the peaceful assimilation of the west, and the N.W.M.P. was formed to ensure that once the Wolseley

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1 This affair is discussed in chapter III.

Expedition and the Manitoba Field Force had established Canadian sovereignty over the prairies, there would be no further disturbances or opposition to the Canadian presence, especially from the Indians. The implication in many books is that the force was formed to protect the Indians from the depradations of American whiskey-traders. The Cypress Hills massacre and similar incidents have traditionally been mentioned as the factors which impelled the government to send the Mounted Police west. Yet the truth may lie in a slight shift of emphasis. One historian of the police, commenting on the Cypress Hills massacre, says "What mattered profoundly was that at least thirty Indians . . . had been murdered on Canadian soil, with the Canadian government powerless to prevent the massacre or avenge it."[1] What alarmed Ottawa was not the death of the Indians but the demonstration of the impotence of the Dominion government, as far as its authority over the new territories was concerned. The first care of the government was to establish Canadian control over the area and to protect white settlers; the main concern for the Indians was that they should cause no trouble.

Thus the Mounted Police were from the first the agents of the high policy of the Canadian government, that policy being to keep the west secure and peaceful. How real was the danger to the west from the United States is a matter for

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1 R.C. Fetherstonhaugh, op. cit., p. 7.

historical conjecture, of course. P.B. Waite, in his recent book on that period, describes the American influence on the western prairies as "both innocent and sinister"; innocent because it was unconscious, and sinister because it was "the same process by which the United States had acquired Texas and Oregon."[1] The Mounted Police were expected to curb this influence. As agents of Canadian control in the territories, they played a political role of the highest order. It was this role which was the really important distinction between the N.W.M.P. and many other police forces.[2] This same political role was extended north of the 60th parallel after 1890, when once more the Mounted Police were chosen for the job of establishing Canadian control, first over the Yukon gold fields, and later, over Hudson Bay and much of the Arctic.

There are many ways by which a country can demonstrate its sovereignty over an area, including exploring it, occupying it, taxing it, conducting a postal service in it, or by policing it. One of the best methods of emphasizing ownership over an area such as the Mackenzie Delta, for instance, was to protect the inhabitants from the depradations of foreigners. The fact that the Canadian government had agents of the police at Herschel Island in 1903 regulating the activities of American whalers and protecting Eskimos was

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1 P.B. Waite, Canada, 1874-1896: Arduous Destiny, (Toronto, 1971), p. 10.

2 In the United States, for instance, the same role was played by the regular army.

thus far more important to Ottawa than the modest sums collected in customs duties.

The work of the Mounted Police on the northern frontier was extraordinarily diverse. The means by which the police established government control over an area, or solidified it--depending on the area and time under consideration--lay mainly in the performance of a variety of services which made the force an integral and eventually an essential part of the development of the area. The police did do some flag-planting on remote islands and on the Yukon passes, but this was a small part of their importance to the establishment of government control; emphasis in succeeding chapters will be placed on the many small steps which really led to this control.

The internal structure of the Mounted Police in the period under discussion reflected its semi-political nature. From 1882 until 1920 the headquarters of the force was at Regina. This meant that all recruit training was done there, the Commissioner was located there, and from Regina came all directives on the internal operations of the force. However, a close liaison with the government was also needed. This service was provided by the Comptroller, an official located in Ottawa. As the name suggests, the Comptroller, who was a civilian rather than a regular member of the police, was originally concerned with financial matters, government appropriations, and the like. Because of his proximity to the government, however, the Comptroller

rose in importance to the point where the incumbent, who had been a clerk in charge of the police in 1876,[1] was by 1883 a deputy minister, virtually responsible for the whole force.[2] The Comptroller, as a civilian, was outside the police hierarchy, but he was the voice of government to the police, and vice versa. Because all reports to the government and directives from it were sent through his office,[3] his importance far exceeded his nominal position. His influence reached its height at the time of the Yukon gold rush, but was in decline by the first World War, partly because improved communications made it easier for the government to deal directly with Regina. It vanished altogether when the police headquarters were moved to Ottawa in 1920 and the position was abolished.

The internal organization of the police fluctuated somewhat with changing requirements for service, but a basic pattern was maintained throughout. The largest unit of organization in the force was the division, commanded by a Superintendent. In 1899 there were ten divisions, eight in the North-West Territories and two in the Yukon. Each division comprised a number of detachments, commonly about a dozen, which were sometimes grouped into sub-districts.

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1 At which time the force was under the Secretary of State.
2 By which time the N.W.M.P., as an agency designed for the Canadian west, had been put under the Minister of the Interior.
3 The files of correspondence from his office are much more useful to the scholar than those from that of the Commissioner himself.

If the detachment was in a large town it might have twenty or thirty men and be commanded by an Inspector; on the other hand there were many detachments in small places manned by one constable, or a constable and a corporal. The force also had a number of surgeons and veterinary surgeons; in 1899 there were six of the former and two of the latter. The police also hired numbers of Supernumerary or "Special" Constables for specific duties such as driving sleds; native employees fell under this heading.

A noteworthy feature of the Mounted Police was the durability of the men who held its important offices. Only three Commissioners ruled the force over a period of forty-five years: Lawrence W. Herchmer, from 1886 to 1900, A. Bowen Perry, from 1900 to 1922, and Cortlandt Starnes, from 1922 to 1931. Frederick White was made clerk in charge of the N.W.M.P. in 1876, and Comptroller in 1880, when that position was created. He held the post until 1913, by which time it had already begun to decline in importance.[1] The fact that there was very little turnover in these two positions, and in others, and very long terms of service for other officers and men, meant that control of the police was steadier and police routine more consistent than they otherwise might have been.

Personalities were important on the government side too. The name which will figure most largely in the gov-

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1 He also held the office of Commissioner of the Northwest Territories (then largely a sinecure) from 1905 to 1918.

ernment's dealings with the police is that of Clifford Sifton, who as Minister of the Interior was in charge of the police from November 1896 to February 1905, during which time the force penetrated the Yukon, the western Arctic, and Hudson Bay. An aggressive, energetic man, he left his mark on the north, especially in the Yukon. The same applied, to a lesser extent, to his successor, Frank Oliver, but it was less true of succeeding ministers.

The chain of command in the N.W.M.P. was not completely rigid; when circumstances required, the government and the police could bend the bureaucratic structure. As an example, control over the police in the Yukon during the gold rush was taken away from the Commissioner in Regina and placed directly under the government, through the Comptroller and the Commissioner of the Yukon.[1] An entire level of command was excluded completely, and the only connection the Commissioner in Regina had with the Yukon was his task of sending reinforcements there. A striking feature of the gold rush episode was the intense interest the government took in the region once the rush got underway, and this interest, it will be seen, was reflected in the close contact between the government and the police during this period.

At the time the force began its service on the northern frontier, its reputation was to a certain extent under a cloud. The activities of the N.W.M.P. during the North-

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1 A different official altogether. See chapter III.

West Rebellion of 1885 had brought it a good deal of unjustified but nonetheless annoying criticism. The police were accused of making tactical blunders and of not having done their part in preventing or suppressing the trouble. After the rebellion there had been a wholesale change of staff, including the appointment of a new Commissioner, L.W. Herchmer.[1] Most of the popular works on the police refute the charges made against them, claiming that for most of the rebellion period the force was under the command of the British Commander of the expedition, General Frederick Middleton, who did not permit it to give a proper account of itself. The truth or otherwise of the charges, which do seem to have been exaggerated, is not the concern here. What is to be noted, rather, is that the police, during the post-rebellion period, were very much eager to prove their mettle and value to Canada--such at least is the impression given by the tone of contemporary police correspondence. Service on the northern frontier was to give them the opportunity of doing so.

By the mid-1890's then, the government had at its call an organization with twenty years of experience behind it, and a well-trained force of men who were prepared to carry out its directives wherever necessary. After 1890 the police began to make tentative moves towards the north; in that year a patrol was made from Norway House to York

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1 In particular those by J.P. Turner, S. Steele, and R.C. Fetherstonhaugh.

Factory, for the purpose of examining a possible land route to Hudson Bay.[1] Patrols were also made to the Athabasca and Peace River areas. But in general, during the ten years following the North-West Rebellion, the police were too busy on the prairies to extend their influence very far to the north. And when in 1894 the call to go north did come, it brought the police not to Hudson Bay, but to a remote and little-known corner of north-west Canada--the Yukon.

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1 An account of the patrol is in R.C. Fetherstonhaugh, op. cit., pp. 94-95. Documentary evidence in the police files for this period has been extensively destroyed by fire.

CHAPTER II

THE YUKON: THE EARLY PERIOD

The land which was about to challenge the police was brutal and primitive; a land of extremes--of heat and cold, of calms and storms, of beauty and desolation. It was a country in which only the most hardy and experienced men could hope to survive and prosper. Men of this stamp had been trading and prospecting in the valley of the Yukon river since the purchase of Alaska by the United States in 1867, thirty years before the great rush.

The first permanent post in what was later to be the Yukon Territory was at Fort Reliance,[1] founded in 1871 by Jack McQuesten, six miles downriver from the present town of Dawson.[2] At this time the commercial enterprises in the area were concerned more with the Indian trade than with mining, but in 1886-87 gold was discovered on the Fortymile river, and as miners began to enter the country, the traders concentrated on them. The oldest trading company was the Alaska Commercial Company, which had been founded in 1868; the other great commercial power was the North American Trading and Transportation Company, formed in 1892. Both were owned and controlled in the United

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1 A temporary post was erected at the junction of the Yukon and Pelly rivers in 1847.

2 The source for most of this material is William Ogilvie's Early Days on the Yukon, (London, 1913).

States.

As is common in a speculative, highly mobile industry such as placer gold mining, the commercial centres in the Alaska-Yukon area tended to be somewhat peripatetic; new posts were built wherever the concentration of miners seemed to justify the construction. Thus in the years immediately after 1890, the posts of Circle City, Selkirk, Ogilvie and Cudahy were built. Particularly after 1888, business on the river increased to the extent that several new steamers had to be built to handle the trade and passenger traffic. Heavy goods always came up the river by steamer, but the route over the coastal mountains which was later to be used by the Klondikers was known and used quite early in the country's history. A United States Army party had come over the Chilkoot Pass from Dyea as early as 1883, and prospectors commonly used it.

The development of the country as a base for speculative mining seems to have taken place in a surprisingly haphazard fashion. Although the first real strike of gold was made in 1886, it had been fairly common knowledge since the 1850's that the area was, or was likely to be, rich in gold. A minor functionary of the Hudson's Bay Company at Fort Yukon, in Alaska, wrote home in 1864 stating rather diffidently that gold could be found up-river so thick that it could be picked up with a spoon, but that he did not think he would bother to go searching for it except as

a last resort.[1] Perhaps the 1860's were the wrong psychological time for a gold rush to the Yukon, for with possibilities in British Columbia, much closer to civilization, only a few men cared to risk the privations of the unknown land far to the north. There was a technological problem as well; in the 1860's the techniques necessary for mining in the different climate and topography of the Yukon had not yet been developed.

Thus up to 1896 the Yukon country was explored in a slow and casual fashion, the commercial centre of the area being next to the Alaska boundary, at Forty Mile. Prior to 1894 there were no government officials in the region at all, except for an occasional surveyor. According to William Ogilvie, the Americans were first on the scene, in the person of Capt. C.W. Raymond of the United States Corps of Engineers, who took observations at Fort Yukon in August 1869, and informed the Hudson's Bay Company men there that--as they well knew--their post stood on American soil. In 1877 the Canadian government employed Joseph Hunter, a civil engineer from Victoria, to survey the point at which the international boundary crossed the Stikine River in northwestern British Columbia. This was the extent of official activity in the area prior to William Ogilvie's journey in 1887 to fix the place where the Yukon River crossed the 141st meridian.[2] In the same year G.M. Dawson and R.G.

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1 Ogilvie, op. cit., pp. 85-87. Ogilvie does not name the man, referring to him as "a young man of the city of Toronto". Apparently the letter was in Ogilvie's possession.

2 Ogilvie, op. cit., pp. 34-36.

McConnell of the Geological Survey of Canada explored the Liard, Pelly and Lewes River regions, quitting the country by way of the Chilkoot Pass.[1]

Before 1894 there was no law enforcement in the country, no collection of customs and gold duties, and, what was most inconvenient for the residents, no legal method of recording mining claims and settling mining disputes. This is not to say that the Yukon was in a state of anarchy. There was an established code of mining regulations and a definite and fairly workable system for settling disputes, set up by the miners themselves, but they were extra-legal, and therefore unstable. By 1898 this situation had been almost completely transformed, largely through the efforts of the N.W.M.P. To understand this transformation, an examination of the de facto legal and civil system of the area is essential, especially since one of the initial challenges facing the police in the Yukon was the regularization of its existing social and political structure.

Although the miners in the Yukon were certainly not representatives of Victorian middle-class society, they had a certain interest in preserving some sort of law and order in their communities. Since there was official law, they had invented or imported their own, based on the traditions and experience of several decades of mining, chiefly in the United States. The basis of this law was a sort of direct

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1 Morris Zaslow, The Opening of the Canadian North 1870-1914, (Toronto, 1971), pp. 82-83.

democracy--the so-called "miners' meeting," by which any miner with a grievance could call an assembly of his fellows who would hear the case, discuss it, and give out a decision or sentence as required. Criminal cases were thus swiftly, and in the beginning generally fairly, dealt with. Civil law, and especially mining law, which was the real concern of the miners' meetings, was conducted in accordance with a set of rules based on United States mining law. Apparently there was considerable local variation in these codes; Ogilvie reported that in Alaska "each locality makes its own by-laws, elects its recorder, fixes the amount of the recording fee, and decides the size of the claims."[1] The usual penalty for infraction of these by-laws was expulsion from the community. The institution of the miners' meeting, although loosely based on the precedents of United States law, reflected accurately the American idea of the self-governing community which, because it was unhampered by external controls, felt free to conduct its affairs as it saw fit. In the best tradition expounded by Frederick Jackson Turner, the miners formed a society which, in theory, produced its own democracy. Most of these men were Americans, and most were unaware of, or unconcerned by, the fact that they were not living in American territory. This was only to be expected in a land which had no formal legal system, and in which the Canadian government seemed to take little

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1 Ogilvie, op. cit., p. 245.

interest, but it did not augur well for Canadian sovereignty in the area. Forty Mile, the main community, was close to the border of Alaska, and although a survey of the boundary had been made by William Ogilvie in 1887, many were unaware of where it ran. In fact, the prospectors searched for gold on both sides of the boundary as if it did not exist--as to all intents, in the early 1890's, it did not.

This American tradition of frontier self-government was bound to conflict with the Canadian, or rather the British system, which was based upon the paternalistic control of a young country by a far-off central authority. In British countries, the source of authority lay theoretically with the Crown rather that with the "people," especially with the sort of people who found their way to the Yukon in the late 1890's. Even if the miners' meetings had functioned in a fair and rational manner, they were bound on principle to be anathema to the government of Canada. In fact, it seems that they had inherent weaknesses. In an ideal world the miners' system might have worked well, but in the Yukon it suffered from the imperfections of the men who ran it. Inevitably demagogues brought about unfair decisions, while the practice of holding meetings in saloons often turned them into carnivals. Joe Ladue, a Yukon veteran, said of the meetings: "they begin by being fair, but after a while cliques are formed, which run things to suit the men who are in them, or what is just as bad, they turn the sessions into fun. Nobody can get

justice from a miners' meeting, when women are on one side."[1] Many miners, libertarians or not, recognized the need for a more regularized and disinterested system of justice, one imported from the outside; this was to be provided by the Mounted Police.

The Canadian government was not altogether ignorant of the situation in the Yukon. From William Ogilvie and others it received reports on the area. Ogilvie had sent the government detailed reports of his expedition of 1887, and in 1888 had personally placed before the Deputy Minister of the Interior, A.M. Burgess, his views on the prospects for mining in the Yukon. The gist of his advice was that the government ought not to worry about the smuggling which was going on, or about the fact that mining in the region was generally being conducted in complete ignorance and disregard of Canadian mining law. Government intervention in the area of Forty Mile, he said, would merely drive the miners to Alaska, and scotch the prospects of the Canadian gold fields. According to Ogilvie, his advice was followed: "It was decided to allow things to stand as they were for awhile, but I was directed to keep my eye on the region, and whenever I thought it time to take possession to notify the Department."[2] This he did in September 1893.

William Ogilvie was not a particularly modest man; such, at any rate, is the impression given by his auto-

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1 Quoted in F.W. Howay, W.N. Sage, and H.F. Angus, British Columbia and the United States, (Toronto, 1942), p. 350.

2 Ogilvie, op. cit., p. 144.

biography, and it is doubtful if the government relied on his opinions and observations to quite the extent that he liked to think. No doubt his suggestions were valued, for he was an intelligent man, and moreover one who was relatively disinterested. But Ottawa had other sources of information. The government was increasingly becoming the target of advice, both solicited and unsolicited, from businessmen and clergymen living in the Yukon. Had there been a Hudson's Bay Company post in the immediate area, the government would no doubt have been much better informed than was the case. But after 1890, complaints began to trickle down to Ottawa, especially from the first two groups mentioned, to the effect that the Yukon was suffering for want of government supervision. Those elements of a frontier society which stood to benefit the most from government intervention began to clamour for such a policy. The traders, who comprised a small but disproportionately influential class in the Yukon, were concerned about the disorderliness of their society. Since most of them were Americans, representing American companies, they were no doubt aware of the chaos of the California gold rush. The situation in the Yukon in the early 1890's was not to be analagous to that of California in 1849, for the Yukon was slower to develop, and by the time the rush occurred, the N.W.M.P. had the situation well in hand. The merchants of the pre-1896 period could not, however, have foreseen this, so their nervousness was quite understandable.

What the traders particularly wanted was some sort of regulation of Yukon society. It was not then a violent society, but it held possibilities of violence, a situation which might be bad for business. The large trading companies had considerable capital invested in the Yukon in the form of trade goods, debts, and storage and transportation facilities. Anything which guaranteed the social and economic stability of the Yukon would thus be to their advantage. Even if the advent of Canadian authority meant imposition of customs duties, these duties would have to be paid by all, and might fall more heavily on the independent trader. The Indians also made the traders nervous; the traders and the clergy, and some of the more perceptive miners as well, were uneasy about the effect that the large amount of liquor being brought into the country might have on the native population.

The liquor traffic in the Yukon, which seems to have alarmed the missionaries more than anything else, was evidently quite extensive for some time before the actual gold "strike." As early as 1893, the local Anglican bishop, W.C. Bompas,[1] had written two letters to the Superintendent General of Indian Affairs, pleading for some regulation of the liquor traffic, which at the time was unchecked, and was causing his Indian charges, he said, to spend "nights

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1 William Carpenter Bompas, Bishop of Athabasca 1874-1884, Bishop of Mackenzie River 1884-1891, Bishop of Selkirk (Yukon) 1891-1906.

of debauch,"[1] endangering the relations between the two races.[2] In the following year Charles Constantine, on his initial mission to the area, took, if anything, a stronger view. He found that the country was controlled by what he called a "whiskey ring," which sold liquor to the miners at fifty cents a drink, thereby reaping large profits. The Indians contented themselves with a home-brew called "hoo-chin-oc," made of molasses, sugar, and dried fruit, which made them violent and sometimes poisoned them.[3] He suggested a strong force to control this traffic. It is interesting to note that no one, not even the bishop, suggested that liquor be banned from the area; the public demand was not to be denied to that extent. But it seemed only sensible to control the flow, obtain tax revenue from it, exclude the criminal element from a share in the profits, and protect the Indians from themselves as much as possible. This essentially pragmatic answer to the problem was typical of the police response to this sort of challenge in the Yukon.

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1 Bompas to T.M. Daly, Ottawa, ? May 1893 and 9 December 1893, Constantine Papers (Public Archives of Canada, MG 30, E-2), v. 3.

2 Charles Constantine was born in England in 1849, emigrated to Canada in 1854, and served with the Red River Expedition of 1870. Appointed Chief of the Manitoba Provincial Police in 1880, he joined the N.W.M.P. in 1886 as an Inspector and served in the Yukon and North-West Territories. He died while on leave in 1912.

3 N.W.M.P. Report 1894, C, p. 76.

It may well be asked at this point whether the Department of Indian Affairs had concerned itself with this situation. The answer is that it did not; in fact, the department, in the pre-gold rush days, did not even acknowledge the existence of Yukon Indians in its annual report. In the report for 1894, a typical year, the closest one gets to the Yukon is a listing of Indians in the various subdivisions of the "Athabasca and M'Kenzie Rivers District" under the heading "Census Return of Resident and Nomadic Indians."[1] It was not until the N.W.M.P. established themselves in the Yukon that the department took any action there, and even then until the first World War they operated entirely through the police.

Bishop Bompas, in his letters to the government, suggested that the Yukon needed a police force; ten men would be sufficient, he said, as there were only about two hundred miners in his immediate vicinity. The assistant manager of the North American Trading and Transportation Company wrote Ottawa in the same vein, warning of the danger from the Indians. He brandished a carrot as well as a stick, suggesting that the customs revenue from the area would more than pay the expenses of a police force, for "the outlook

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1 Report of the Department of Indian Affairs for 1894, Canada, Sessional Paper no. 14, 1895, p. 287. The returns were made by missionaries and officers of the Hudson's Bay Company. Rampart Post is included, but no figures are given for it. Grants were made to the Anglican mission school at Buxton in the Yukon, but not, apparently, before 1900, although the school predated the gold rush.

for gold . . . is very encouraging." He predicted that if customs officers were sent in, the trading companies would buy their goods in Canada, whereas at the present, because of the smuggling, they were forced to buy in the United States.[1] It is significant that the impetus for government intervention came as much from the north as from Ottawa. Moreover, although it came chiefly from commercial and religious interests, it was also the wish, according to Constantine's later report, of a good many of the miners themselves. Thus the frontier had made its traditional appeal for "law and order." In this instance the law-abiding elements seem to have been unusually apprehensive, for there was very little crime in the district; it was more the possibility of future trouble which unnerved them. In the United States such appeals often fell upon deaf ears; hence the necessity for miners' meetings and vigilante committees in the land of their origin. In Canada they did not.

Why was the government of Canada so quick, relatively speaking, to act on the complaints and requests it received from the Yukon? One reason was that this was the sort of situation that the government, by the mid-1890's, was equipped by experience to manage. The nineteenth century territorial quarrels between Canada and the United States, and especially the Oregon crisis of 1846, stood as examples

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1 C.H. Hamilton to T.M. Daly, n.d., Constantine Papers, v. 3.

to apprehensive Canadians of what could happen if Americans were permitted to occupy unmolested an area in dispute or under question. The purchase of Alaska in 1867 showed that Americans were not uninterested in the north-west corner of the continent. There had been trouble over the Alaska-British Columbia boundary as early as the 1870's.[1] The example of California, and to a lesser extent British Columbia, showed what could happen if public order was neglected during a gold rush. The North-West Rebellion of 1885 had, perhaps, taught the government the dangers of procrastination. It is little wonder then that Ottawa moved with unwonted alacrity to ensure that this most distant of her inhabited possessions remained securely in the Dominion.

The Canadian government had in the Mounted Police a body of men the flexibility and adaptability of which had been proved for over twenty years in the development of the Canadian prairie lands. Although from its inception the N.W.M.P. had caught the imagination of the Canadian public, its reputation had been, if not stained, at least called into question by its forced inactivity during the rebellion of 1885, and by an investigation held in 1892 into the alleged tyranny of Commissioner Herchmer.[2] Those who were

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1 C.C. Tansill, Canadian-American Relations, 1875-1911, (Gloucester, Mass., 1964), chapter V.

2 J.P. Turner, The Northwest Mounted Police, 1873-1893, 2 vols., (Ottawa, 1950), II, pp. 518-522. Lawrence W. Herchmer was born in England in 1840. He was appointed commissariat officer for the Boundary Commission, 1872-1874, Commissioner of Rebellion Losses in 1885, and Commissioner of the N.W.M.P. in 1886. He led the police contingent to the Boer War. He retired in 1900, and died in 1915.

concerned about the reputation of the force thus welcomed the suggestion of the Minister of the Interior at the beginning of 1894 that the N.W.M.P. would be the logical body to bring law to the Yukon. The Minister of the Interior was responsible for the North-West Territories, so it was from his office that the idea properly came. The original suggestion was to send an officer and five men north, but Frederick White,[1] Comptroller of the police, suggested that such a small body of men might not be met "in the right spirit by between three and four hundred miners who hitherto have respected no laws but those of their own making."[2] Rather, he thought, a police officer, styled "Agent of the Dominion Government," should be sent north to carry out a reconnaissance; one man, or two, would be sufficient to spy out the situation without unduly alarming the miners. This was the course adopted, in the same year.

The decision came at a fortunate time for the police, for it was soon to give them a new lease on life at a time when their numbers were being reduced from the thousand man strength they had been given in 1885, and when there was

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1 Frederick White was born in England in 1847, and emigrated to Canada in 1862. He worked for a time for the Grand Trunk Railway, and entered the civil service as a clerk in the Justice Department in 1869. He was transferred to the Department of the Secretary of State and made clerk in charge of the N.W.M.P. branch of the department in 1876. In 1880 he became Sir John A. Macdonald's private secretary, and the same year was appointed Comptroller of the N.W.M.P., which position he held until 1913. He was appointed Commissioner of the unorganized North-West Territories in 1905 and held this post until his death in 1918.

2 White to Minister of the Interior, 2 May 1894, Constantine Papers, v. 3.

some talk of abolishing them altogether and replacing them with provincial police forces. Since their original mission had been to pacify the Indians, there was some suggestion that, having served this purpose, they should be disbanded. This idea was one of the pawns in the ferociously partisan federal politics of the era. For example, in 1894 the Liberal member of Parliament for Wellington, James McMullen, attacked the N.W.M.P. as the tool of the government's unjust tariff policy:

> The only ground upon which you can advocate a continuance of the mounted police force [is] that it may be used as a preventative force against smuggling . . . The result of our high tariff is: that under the excuse of keeping the Indians and the half-breeds in the North-west from murdering the population there, we are keeping a mounted police force to prevent smuggling . . . 800 men riding around from place to place, having an enjoyable time, living like lords, and doing little or nothing except in the way of preventative duty along the frontier at a cost of $700,000 a year. [1]

The political nature of the police has already been mentioned as a cause for the eagerness with which they accepted the challenge of Yukon service. The Canadian civil service was influenced by politics at the turn of the century as much as it is today, and probably more so, and this was as true of the police as of any government agency. The political loyalties of many of the officers of the force were both strong and well known. Political influence was used, even by ordinary constables, to obtain favours which might have

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1 Canada, House of Commons, Debates, 1894, pp. 4651-4683.

otherwise not been forthcoming, and this practice was a source of annoyance to police officials, who could not always control it. "Under strict rules of discipline" the Comptroller complained, "men can be brought to time [sic, meaning "imprisonment"] for going outside the proper channels, but as you know, we cannot enforce these regulations when a member of Parliament or a Senator or a prominent supporter of the government writes to the Minister. Their representations must be recognized."[1]

The government itself deliberately injected a political note into daily operations of the police by requiring the force to buy its supplies only from merchants and wholesalers who were government-approved; that is, who supported the government politically. Thus, for instance, in Dawson the funerals of indigents were required to be conducted by a firm with the suggestive name of Brimston and Stewart, who were strong Liberals.[2] Nor was there any furtiveness about the distribution of patronage. Lists of "friendly" local merchants were distributed to most detachments. The one for Winnipeg at the turn of the century covered everything from Auctioneers to Windmill Outfitters.[3] Clifford Sifton, a master practitioner of the art of patronage, could

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1 White to Commissioner A.B. Perry, 13 February 1905, R.C.M.P. Papers, Public Archives of Canada, Comptroller's Letterbooks, RG 18, A-2, (hereafter Compt. Lbks.), v. 92.

2 The order of 15 May 1901 to the police is in R.C.M.P. Papers, Public Archives of Canada, Comptroller's Correspondence, RG 18, A-1, (hereafter Compt. Corr.), v. 347.

3 Compt. Corr., v. 347.

write with no apparent hesitation to Sir Wilfrid Laurier that "the only house in Canada dealing in such goods [saddlery] whose members are friendly to the administration . . . is . . . Adams Bros. . . . and I should be glad if the patronage of the North West Mounted Police were given to them." That firm's chief competitor was described by Sifton as "the most uncompromising and violent opponent of the Government, and perhaps the most offensive to our Liberal friends of any Conservative in the city of Winnipeg."[1]

With partisanship of this sort a feature of police operations, it is hardly surprising that the force on occasion was used as a political football in Parliament and the press. In 1895 the Liberal party, then in opposition, took advantage of a rumoured reduction in the strength of the force to draw a horrifying picture of prairie dwellers, deserted by the police, falling prey to murderous savages--all because of false economies on the part of the government.[2] Others accused the government of weakening the police by making its commissioned ranks "a dumping-ground for the scions of political favourites," a charge which was not entirely unfounded.[3] Commissioner Herchmer was

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1 Sifton to Laurier, 5 February 1897, Compt. Corr., v. 347.
2 Fort Macleod Gazette, 26 July 1895.
3 Calgary Herald, 14 February 1895. R.C. MacLeod, op. cit., chapter V, concludes that a majority of the officers owed their commissions to politics, but since there were so many more applications than vacancies, the government could choose the best Liberal or the best Conservative applicants, and the standards of the force did not suffer.

compelled to explain that although the force was being reduced by a hundred and fifty men, only the dead-wood was being lopped off, and the police were not being rendered less effective.[1] The communities of the North-West Territories howled with a single voice that any diminution of the police force would leave them defenceless against the Indian hordes;[2] nevertheless it seemed that with the civilizing of the prairies proceeding at a rapid rate, a body of men such as the N.W.M.P. had a future of attrition, which would end only in their being replaced by a more domestic and less military force. In actual fact, however, the settlement of the prairies brought the police more work rather than less. But the police had been set up, and at this date still thought of themselves, as a force of pioneers. Once their initial task had been completed, they would have to be replaced, or, as in fact happened, they would have to adjust and expand to meet the changed requirements of a more settled community.

In the face of this shrinking process, the men in command of the police only naturally looked with favour on an opportunity to prove their worth anew, although it was not until three years after 1894 that it became apparent just how much the government needed them.

Thus it was with considerable dispatch and enthusiasm

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1 Calgary Herald, 26 March 1895.
2 Fort Macleod Gazette, 5 April 1895.

that the Commissioner responded to a resolution of the Privy Council, approved by the Governor-General on May 26th 1894, to send a police officer into the Yukon. That resolution read in part as follows:

> in reference to . . . a letter from Mr. C.H. Hamilton, Secretary and Assistant Manager of the North American Trading and Transportation Company, and also two letters . . . from the Rt. Rev. Dr. Bompas, Bishop of Selkirk . . . The Minister desires to state that in the interests of the peace and good government of that portion of Canada, in the interests also of the public revenue, it is highly desireable that immediate provision be made for the regulation and control of the traffic in intoxicating liquor, for the administration of lands containing the precious metals, for the collection of customs duties upon the extensive imports being made into that section of Canada from the United States with the view of supplying the miners, for the protection of the Indians, and for the administration of justice generally. [1]

This resolution sums up neatly all the reasons for sending the police to the Yukon. Commissioner Herchmer suggested that an officer and a non-commissioned officer be sent north as soon as possible to "take possession of the territory."[2] The officer was to have as many titles as Pooh-Bah, for he was to act for all branches of the government which had any interest in the area. The government's uncertainty about the reception which the miners might give its emissaries is reflected in the instructions, which bade the officer exercise "discreetly . . . without risk of complications, the powers conferred upon him by his several commissions".[3]

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1 A copy is in Constantine Papers, v. 3. The government, judging from this statement, seems to have been swayed by the appeals from the men on the scene.

2 Ibid.

3 Ibid.

It remains to dispel a myth which has surrounded the decision of the government to send police to the Yukon. The myth is that the government dealt with the Yukon situation in a hesitant and half-hearted manner. Farley Mowat, a popularizer of the north and a harsh critic of the Canadian government and all its works, has tried to show that the police came to the Yukon hastily and almost too late. In Canada North Mowat writes:

> It was touch and go whether she would even bother to uphold her claims. In 1898 the great Klondike rush into the Yukon triggered a move by the United States to annex that rich territory. There were those in Ottawa even that far back who felt that any attempt to withstand the Americans would be "bad business" and might endanger commercial relations.
>
> Fortunately not all Canadians were so spineless, and so a small detachment of the North West Mounted Police was sent to the Yukon to display the Canadian flag. [1]

This fantasy in support of present-day nationalism is so absurd that the present writer might well be accused of setting up a straw man. Mowat's belief that the United States government was planning to annex the Yukon with the acquiescence of Canadian civil servants is completely unsupported by fact, and his assertion that the police were sent to the Yukon only in response to the rush of 1897-98 is demonstrably untrue. These paragraphs are quoted only to show what nonsense is still being put before the public on the subject.

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1 Farley Mowat, Canada North, (Toronto, 1967), p. 33.

The man selected to make this reconnaissance trip was Inspector Charles Constantine; he was accompanied by Staff-Sergeant Charles Brown. Since our chief sources of knowledge on conditions in the Yukon at the time are Constantine's reports, it is worth examining them in some detail. Only when the situation as it existed in 1894 is fully known can the work of the police be properly evaluated.

Constantine left his post at Moosomin, N.W.T., (he was then in command of the Moosomin sub-division, or sub-district) on May 20th, 1894, and travelled to Ottawa, where Frederick White put him up at his club and took him around to meet the various ministers who were interested in the Yukon.[1] Then, after winding up his affairs at Moosomin, Constantine left Victoria, with Brown, for Juneau, on June 22nd, arriving four days later. Rather than waste time on the long voyage up the Yukon River, Constantine determined to go into the interior by the shortest route, the Chilkoot Pass. He travelled from Juneau to Dyea (which he spelled Dia-Yah), a practice which was becoming increasingly popular among the newer crop of miners, and prepared to cross the pass. There he found to his dismay that the natives, who served as packers, were not so debauched by the white man that they had lost all sense of the profit motive. They had, he wrote, "but one idea, and that is how much they can get out of you, and being at their mercy as to packing, I

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1 Constantine Papers, v. 1.

had, as a rule, to submit to their extortion."[1] This irritation was understandable, but not entirely fair. The Indians had a proprietary interest in the area. They felt they owned the pass, and had a right to charge tolls on its users. Since it was presumably unthinkable that a police officer should carry his own baggage, and since at any rate the two men had eight hundred pounds between them, they were forced to pay the going rate of fifteen cents per pound for getting their equipment over the pass. This was their first brush with the high cost of living prevalent in the Yukon; had they gone in by the same route three years later, the charges would have been considerably greater. Constantine, in fact, rather exaggerated the hardships of the trip. It was not really difficult to go over the pass empty-handed, especially in summer; it was the repeated trips in winter, loaded with supplies, that made it torture for the Klondikers of 1897-98.

The arrival of the two police at Lake Lindeman marked the end of the difficult part of the journey, and after an easy trip down the Yukon, they arrived at the mining community of Forty Mile, not far from the Alaska boundary. Since this first mission was one of reconnaissance, Constantine took pains to secure opinions from every section of the community, and in this he was careful not to neglect the most numerous segment, the miners themselves. These men were professionals, and their opinions had the weight of

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1 N.W.M.P. Report 1894, C, p. 70. This motif is considered at greater length below.

experience, if not of disinterest.

The miners were of two minds about the country. They all thought, as miners will, that although it was not yet prosperous, it offered great possibilities--that a little more exploring and prospecting could bring handsome rewards. But some wanted the country opened up more fully for exploration, to facilitate this discovery; this could best be done, they said, by improving navigation on the Yukon River.[1] Others wanted to keep the society closed, lest thieves, gamblers, and rival miners come flooding in. The professional nature of these men is further indicated by the fact that Constantine reported surprisingly little drunkenness among them. "Many of the miners do not drink at all" he wrote, "and but few to excess . . . When they come in from the mines for winter they have a general carouse . . . [then] the camp settles down . . . and is . . . quiet."[2] He found that the difficulties of transporting supplies into the country tended to restrict the incoming flow of miners, partly because of rumours of hardship and scarcity of food. Oddly enough, it was the opinion of many miners that there were no really large concentrations of gold in the country, and

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1 The following improvements were suggested: "Tramways on the portages between Lakes Linderman and Bennet at the cañon and White Horse would be a great help to small parties, as they are not able to portage their boats alone. . . . The cost would not be great. The miners are of the opinion that the rocks in the channel of the Five Fingers could be removed in the winter when the water is low. This would make navigation safe for a steamer coming down; then there would be uninterrupted navigable water to the foot of the White Horse, a distance of about 2,300 miles." N.W.M.P. Report 1894, C, pp. 73-75.

2 Ibid., p. 77.

what there was was spread evenly enough so that a modest profit could be made almost anywhere. Few men had to that time made more than a small sum from mining.[1]

It cannot be determined exactly how Constantine found out what the miners were thinking. If the sentiments he voiced were those of the "respectable miners"[2] who wanted schools to be opened so that they could bring in their families, they were probably not those of the majority of the miners, who were hardly "respectable" to that extent.

In his report, Constantine advised the government on a wide variety of matters, in many of which, such as liquor, mail, mining, Indians, and Americans, may be seen the beginnings of tasks which were to occupy the police over the following six or seven years. As to liquor, Constantine, though confirming the complaint of Bishop Bompas that it was flowing unchecked into the country, did not support the bishop's alarms about unbridled drunkenness. On the subject of Indians, Constantine delivered a rather severe opinion--they were "a lazy, shiftless lot and are content to hang about the mining camps. They suffer much from chest trouble, and die young."[3] Constantine's opinion is not untypical of that of the police generally, for these as a rule did not hide their contempt for the Yukon Indians,

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1 N.W.M.P. Report 1894, C, p. 75.
2 Op. cit., p. 77.
3 Op. cit., p. 78.

who indeed seemed to spend most of their time begging for food and whiskey around the white men's camps. Constantine estimated their numbers at five thousand, which, owing to the diseases which had raged among them since the coming of the miners was probably twice the actual total; a census taken several years later showed an Indian population of fifteen hundred.[1] In August 1894, Bishop Bompas arranged a meeting between Constantine and local Indians, and acted as the interpreter. Constantine was relieved to find that the Indians were friendly towards the Canadians because the Hudson's Bay Company had always treated them more fairly than had the Americans.[2] His main concern for the Indians seems to have been to ensure that they would cause no trouble; if he was satisfied that there was no danger from them, he did not care much what happened to them. Constantine was a policeman first, and thought of himself primarily as a keeper of the peace and enforcer of the laws. That he had been made an Indian Agent for this trip did not concern him much, particularly since the Indian Department had, while asking him to take any action he could in the

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1 The question of Indian population statistics is discussed in the Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development publication Indians of the Yukon and Northwest Territories, (Ottawa, 1970).

2 N.W.M.P. Report 1894, C, pp. 78-79. Presumably the Indians had encountered the Company on journeys to Fort McPherson or Rampart House, had memories of Fort Yukon, or had heard of its benevolence by word of mouth. Or perhaps, like many natives, they simply told the white man what he wanted to hear.

Indians' interest, warned him to keep his expenses at an absolute minimum.[1]

The central point of Constantine's report was that the Yukon was quiet and peaceful enough that a fairly small force could be relied upon to do the job of policing. The only source of conflict would lie in the attempt to enforce laws with which the miners were not familiar, especially the customs laws. Constantine reported that the miners were "very jealous of what they consider their rights,"[2] and would have to be dealt with firmly in the introduction of Dominion law to the area. He believed that a sufficient force would be two officers, a surgeon, three senior NCO's, three corporals, and thirty-five or forty constables, together with the proper equipment and supplies. As was the common practice with such requests from civil servants, he was to get half this number.

Having satisfied himself on the state of local affairs, Constantine returned to civilization at the end of October 1894, leaving S/Sgt. Brown to winter in the Yukon. Before leaving, he extracted the sum of $3,248.82 in customs duties from the miners. He found this duty "distasteful," probably because the miners grumbled a good deal. Constantine reported that there was a possibility of trouble arising over the matter, but that "better counsels . . . prevailed" and

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1 Department of Indian Affairs to Constantine, 22 May 1894, Constantine Papers, v. 3.

2 N.W.M.P. Report 1894, C, p. 81.

the money was collected without open resistance.[1] This was an important first demonstration of sovereignty.

The winter of 1894-95 was spent in preparation for the expedition of the next summer. The government apparently had some reservations and second thoughts, for as late as May 1895, Frederick White was writing of "a good deal of hesitation on the part of the Government about sending any police to the Yukon District."[2] Likely this was on the grounds of the expense involved. In the same letter, however, White admitted that the move, once made, would almost certainly be permanent, and that the government would have to take the long view of the whole matter, especially in the matter of arranging the supply of the detachment. This letter was, by the way, in reference to one of the Canadian merchants who, directly after the news of the proposed expedition was made public, patriotically offered to supply the police with genuine Canadian goods and thus keep the trade out of Yankee hands.

It can be seen now, from the vantage point of seventy-five years, that the decision to extend the police service to the Yukon was not as well thought out as it might have been. Lack of real knowledge of conditions in the Yukon, Constantine's report notwithstanding, led the police hierarchy into some errors of judgement. The lines of demarca-

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1 N.W.M.P. Report 1894, C, p. 84.
2 White to G.E. Corbould (M.P. for New Westminster), 23 May 1895, Compt. Corr., v. 110.

tion as to who was going to do what, as far as civil service functions went, was never made crystal clear in the Yukon, and when a growth of population occurred which exceeded everyone's original expectation, the discrepancies between vague guidelines and harsh realities became glaringly apparent.

A good example of how the acorns of good intention became great oaks of discord can be found in the mail service. Before the arrival of the police, what mail service there was to the Yukon was provided by the trading companies on a private basis. It was realized on all sides that the police would need a more regular service, so in May 1895, Frederick White suggested that, until the population of the Yukon increased to the point where a regular mail service was deemed necessary, the police could be authorized to carry one mail in and one out during the winter of 1895-96, across country from Fort Cudahy to Juneau.[1] The police thus undertook an obligation which soon came to involve a tremendous amount of work, and which they were to spend a great deal of time in the next few years trying to escape. Much the same was true of the customs service; the police cheerfully offered to collect customs, and then found, when the work had increased far beyond their expectations, that they had incurred an obligation which was not easy to throw off. Many such tasks

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1 White to Lt-Col. W. White, Deputy Postmaster-General, 10 May 1895, Compt. Corr., v. 133. No money was mentioned in the exchange of letters, so presumably the police did not expect to be paid for this service.

seem to have been taken up by the police from lack of appreciation as to what was likely to be involved; on the other hand, a good part of such work was incurred simply through the lack of anyone else to do it.

After a winter of planning, Constantine and a party of eighteen left Regina on June 1st 1895, and travelling via St. Michael's, reached Fort Cudahy on July 24th.[1] The greater part of that year was occupied in erecting a police post, Fort Constantine, near Fort Cudahy. The building of this post gives an idea of the purely physical difficulties under which the police were forced to operate. Since there was no timber in the area suitable for building, Constantine sent his second-in-command, Inspector D'Arcy Strickland, with a work party nearly thirty miles up the river to get logs. At the end of three weeks' hard labour in a muggy Yukon summer they brought four hundred logs downstream; another two hundred and fifty were later required. Foundations proved a problem. Spongy moss two feet thick was laboriously removed from the ground, so that the sun could melt the ice and permit the laying of mud-sills. The work was finished by early October, and by January 1896 Constantine could proudly say that he was making his annual report from "the most northerly military or semi-military post in the British

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1 N.W.M.P. Report 1895, p. 7. Constantine says the party consisted of "two officers, one assistant-surgeon, and sixteen non-commissioned officers and constables," presumably including himself, since the only other officer on the expedition was Inspector Strickland.

Empire."[1] And in Seattle there were editorial murmurings about British fortifications in the far north.

As soon as they had established themselves in their new post, the police set about making their authority felt in the district. The word "district" is of special significance here, for on July 26th 1895, Ottawa had created a new District of Yukon.[2] The setting apart of the Yukon as a separate district of the Territories shows that as early as 1895 the government had recognized the special character of that part of the country. Constantine had been made land agent and collector of customs for the new district. The fact that he was vested with these powers meant he was charged with the duty not only of enforcing the laws, but of interpreting and administering them as well. He was in fact to be, for the present, judge, jury, and executioner, in these fields as well as in others. His successors for several years found themselves in the same position, and the substitution of police common sense for orthodox legal knowledge and procedure was to become an important aspect of law enforcement in the Yukon.

It was in his capacity of land agent that Constantine

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1 N.W.M.P. Report 1895, p. 7.

2 J.N.E. Brown, "The Evolution of Law and Government in the Yukon Territory," in S.M. Wickett, ed., Municipal Government in Canada, (Toronto, 1907), p. 198. The same order in council established the Districts of Franklin, Ungava, and Mackenzie.

encountered his first and only real challenge. This opposition came from the miners on Glacier Creek in the summer of 1896, and it marked, as nothing else could have done, the passing of the old free way of life in the Yukon, and the replacement of the older system of justice by the new. The facts of the incident were briefly as follows: two owners of a claim at Glacier Creek leased it to a third man, who defaulted on the payments to his labourers and left the country. A meeting was called, and miners seized the claim in lieu of wages, then sold it to a fourth man. Thereupon the original owners appealed to the police for redress. When the new owner appeared at the police office, which was also the recording office, and was refused registration of his purchase, he left "breathing defiance." Constantine realized "that this was the turning-point, and should I give them their way or recognize them in any manner, trouble would never cease." He immediately sent Strickland to the disputed claim with ten men, telling him to act circumspectly but firmly, and sent a note to the miners' leaders warning them to desist. This they did; the claim was handed back to its original owners, and the only challenge to police authority in the Yukon ever presented by an organized group vanished.[1] The denouement of the affair

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1 The incident is recounted in detail in Constantine's report to White, 13 July 1896, Compt. Corr., v. 123.

was described by one of the police NCO's who took part in it:

> Thereupon a party of twelve of us, armed with Lee-Metfords and prepared for all possible contingencies (for no one could foretell how the matter would end, or in what spirit we should be received), went up Forty Mile river in boats and marched across country from Forty Mile to Glacier. I suppose we presented a formidable appearance with our rank and file and our magazine rifles, or perhaps the wrong-doers were beginning to realize that their action had been unjustifiable, for we experienced no resistance of any kind. We warned those in possession off the claim under penalty, and formally handed it to the original owner. We had not to make a single arrest, and after informing every one at the creek that such a proceeding was not legal and must not occur again, we simply marched back to head-quarters, and thus the whole business, which might easily have grown to alarming proportions, closed peacefully and satisfactorily. . . . No ill-will was borne us for our share in the proceedings, and I think that every one was in his heart glad to feel that there was a force in the land that would protect his individual rights and those of others. [1]

It was now quite obvious that the traditional system of justice obtained from the miners' meetings had given way to police law. This was exactly the sort of matter on which miners' meetings traditionally ruled--one where the law seemed unfair (for under Canadian "justice" the workers were apparently never paid). The old order had passed in the Yukon, and American-style frontier democracy had been replaced by British authoritarian paternalism.

In the absence of testimony from the miners concerned it is not easy to ascertain why the defence of their much-vaunted liberties should have been so feeble. The police

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1 M.H.E. Hayne, Pioneers of the Klondyke, (London, 1897), p. 124.

had relatively few men in the district, and the whole affair made Constantine sufficiently uneasy that he privately appealed for a larger detachment.[1] M.H.E. Hayne suggests that the miners were overawed by the display of military force, for the police descended upon them carrying Lee-Metford rifles. It is to be presumed that the miners' desire for order outweighed their desire for self-government, and that they were not as solidly organized as might at first be supposed. Many of them were, as has already been noted, "well-disposed," and these doubtless had an influence on their fellows. However, for the present there was only truce between many miners and the police; they would wait to see what positive benefits were to be gained from this organization imposed upon them from without.

Although the police were successful in this encounter with organized opposition, their position in the Yukon was not yet clear-cut. Indeed, there was considerable uncertainty even at the highest government levels as to exactly what role they were expected to play. George M. Dawson, the Director of the Geological Survey and an experienced observer of Yukon affairs,[2] warned the Deputy Minister of the Interior, A.M. Burgess, in April 1896, that opposition to the police was likely to increase with the fresh advent of "rough characters," and that the force should be increased.

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1 Constantine to White, 13 July 1896, Compt. Corr., v. 123.
2 Particularly since his 1887 visit to the Yukon and his later involvement in the Anglo-American marine boundary discussions in the Alaskan region.

Burgess was non-committal in reply, giving the opinion that he rather thought twenty police were enough. White, commenting on the exchange of letters, lamented the fact that the federal general elections had prevented any decision being made as to a formal system of government for the Yukon, in the absence of which, he said, he was forced to tell Constantine to stand pat and keep most of his men near Fort Constantine, even though that meant the loss of a season's progress and a good deal of customs revenue.[1]

Thus for lack of clear-cut instructions, the police were compelled to adopt a fairly unaggressive attitude in the Yukon as far as extending the limits of government authority was concerned. In their primary role of law enforcement, the police had little to do during this period, for although more miners were entering the country, there was still very little crime. The Judicial Return of the Yukon Detachment from August 1895 to May 1896 shows only four cases tried, all minor, of which two were dismissed.[2] The police did not provide a government for the Yukon--they could not; what they did was serve notice that there was a government that intended to make its force felt; that in the meantime the laws must be obeyed.

On the eve of the great discovery of gold, therefore, the challenge faced by the police in the Yukon had been

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1 The correspondence is in Compt. Corr., v. 119.
2 Ibid.

fairly uncomplicated--certainly as compared with what was soon to come. Up to 1896 the police had had pretty clear sailing in the Yukon, in large part because of the swiftness of Ottawa's response to the situation, and because the obstacles they had to overcome were the traditional ones--physical difficulties and small-scale opposition to their authority. In overcoming these obstacles they did very well; the post was built and the miners outfaced. These were much the same duties as the police had been accustomed to performing on the prairies. Hardships and the antipathy of local groups were challenges the police could easily meet; it remained to be seen whether their performance would suffer when after 1896 they were faced with a set of challenges considerably more complex.

CHAPTER III

THE POLICE AND THE GOLD RUSH

The government, however, was not to be given much time to develop a plan for governing the new district. In August 1896 the discovery of gold at Bonanza Creek gave to the whole matter of police and government in the Yukon an entirely new sense of urgency. The story of the immediate stampede of nearly all the men in the Yukon to the Klondike area, which has the rare distinction in Canadian history of being both melodramatic and true, needs no repetition here. It is important in this context only insofar as it affected the operations of the police in the Yukon, which it did greatly.

When the rush to the Dawson area occurred, the police were compelled to move with the miners, and to transfer the centre of their operations to the new town. This involved a good deal of confusion, and the labour of building a post all over again. Fortunately there was no immediate rush from the "outside"; because of the extreme slowness of communications the new discoveries did not become common knowledge until the early summer of the next year, 1897. Had it been otherwise, and had the flood of gold-seekers managed to get to the Yukon in early 1897, the police, with their tiny detachment of twenty men, would likely have been swamped.

According to Sam Steele,[1] the police had been "for nearly a quarter of a century . . . unconsciously preparing for this supreme test. . . . And--true to its long-established principles of authority, though not borrowing trouble, and providing 'protection ahead of settlement'--when the Rush developed, it was already on the ground."[2] True, the police were there at the right time largely because of fortuitous circumstance, but they were there, and that was what counted. Furthermore, they had done more than merely advertise their presence; they had established their authority by firm dealings with the miners. Constantine saw his force was not large enough, and quickly appealed for an increase in strength to seventy-five.[3] He realized too that this alone was not sufficient, that to meet the challenges of these new developments the police would have to become much more mobile. While the police had been at Forty Mile, it had been easy to patrol Glacier and Miller Creeks, where most of the mining was done, from the one police post. Now

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1 Sir Samuel B. Steele was born in Canada West in 1849, son of an ex-Royal Navy officer who had served at Trafalgar. He joined the militia in 1866 and served in the Fenian raid of that year. He served in the Red River Expedition of 1870 and joined the N.W.M.P. on its formation in 1873. He served in the Boer War, and commanded the South African Constabulary from 1901 to 1906. He was knighted, and reached the rank of Major-General. He died in 1919.

2 S.B. Steele, Forty Years in Canada, (Toronto, 1918), p. 23.

3 N.W.M.P. Report 1896, pp. 235-236.

police responsibility had moved far upstream, and new methods of travel were needed. Constantine advised the purchase of a steam launch to link Forty Mile with the Klondike. This undoubtedly set the police administration back somewhat, for it went far beyond their original expectations of expenditure.

Constantine also urged the advisability of improving the communications of the country generally--that a route be opened from the south, either by way of Teslin Lake or by way of the recently blazed Dalton's Trail, and more specifically, that a trail be opened in the Klondike area connecting Dawson with the Bonanza and Hunker Creek districts. He felt that the economic potential of the country justified opening up a wagon road from the south--a suggestion which the government later followed up in the Peace River-Yukon Trail expedition of 1905-1906. He believed that the fact that he had collected more than $20,000 in mining fees in less than a year justified giving the miners some return on their tax money. There was considerable grumbling on this last point; many American miners resented being the milch cows of a foreign government. As Constantine put it "the miners think that as some return for the large amount of money paid in by them increased facilities for reaching the mines should be provided by the government."[1]

The police and the few government officials who were

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1 N.W.M.P. Report 1896, p. 237.

in the Yukon at this time had the reputation of being remarkably selfless. None of them seems to have tried to take personal advantage of the new wealth, or so says Pierre Berton, who is lavish in his praise of William Ogilvie, who was at that period the government land surveyor, and was later to be Commissioner of the Yukon. Ogilvie, says Berton, was as "incorruptible as he was scrupulous" and "stubbornly refused to stake an inch of ground or to turn a single cent of profit . . . Only one other man in the Yukon felt the same way, and that was Charles Constantine."[1] In this connection it is interesting to note a letter to Constantine from A.M. Burgess, Deputy Minister of the Interior, of April 17th 1896:

> An application has been received here signed by C.H. Hamilton, William Ogilvie and yourself to purchase 160 acres of coal lands on the south side of Coal Creek, as well as other applications for mining claims in your own name. . . . It is unlawful for an employee of the Department of the Interior to purchase Dominion Lands except under the authority of the Governor-General in council.[2]

The absence of the profit motive was thus not entirely voluntary. In fact, this prohibition was a subject of bitter complaint from the police, who suggested that their miserable salaries might be augmented by part-time prospecting, that their morale would be improved by their being given a

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1 Pierre Berton, The Klondike Fever, (New York, 1958), p. 77.
2 Constantine Papers, v. 3. The prohibition was further emphasized when an order in council of March 29th 1899 formally forbade the practice.

"stake" in the country, and that the mining claims would be better off in the hands of loyal police than in those of Americans of dubious quality.

Beginning with the rush of 1897-98 the challenge faced by the police in the Yukon became so complex that it is difficult to examine it in a chronological fashion; thus it will now be examined topically. Another fact which makes this new approach necessary is that chronology is confusing and deceptive; although the police always responded quickly to any challenge, the end result--the official reaction to the situation--was often considerably delayed. As an example: gold was discovered in 1896, the rush began in 1897, reached its peak in 1898 and then fell off; but, for reasons to be discussed later, the maximum number of police in the Yukon--just over three hundred--was not reached until 1903. Similarly, some of the great expeditions to find alternate, all-Canadian routes to the Yukon took place long after people had stopped trying to get there. The government at times (though not always) moved much too slowly to meet changing conditions in the Yukon. Moreover, if the government had inertia, it also had momentum, and once its enthusiasm was aroused, it was hard to turn it off. Thus what went on vis-a-vis the police and the Yukon did not necessarily reflect what was going on in government circles at the time; chronology is thus misleading.

To treat at first the question of the numbers of

police in the Yukon--even before the great discovery of August 1896 Constantine had requested more men. Fortunately this request was granted, so that by May of the next year the police strength had risen to forty. In this case the government was not slow to react, for with the news of the strike an emergency effort was made to get men to the Yukon as quickly as possible, to such effect that the strength rose to ninety-five by September 1897, and to 196 by February 1898.[1] Those in charge of police policy were so keenly aware of the new responsibilities and commitments in the north that it was planned at the time to station fully half of the entire police force in the Yukon. This was in 1899, when enthusiasts still believed that the Yukon still had unlimited possibilities, and when some senior officials of the police believed that their days of usefulness in the Territories to the south were clearly numbered. This feeling is one possible reason why the police officials in the Yukon were so reluctant after 1900 to see any diminution of their force. All sorts of reasons were given for this reluctance, such as the belief that although criminals were reduced in number, those remaining had become craftier and harder-working.[2] The police, like all institutions, had a built-in resistance to reduction of their power, and one may see in police protestations that the Yukon still needed them, a desire to be needed. It may also be of some

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1 Compt. Corr., v. 168.
2 R.N.W.M.P. Report 1905, III, p. 3.

significance that 1903, the year when the number of police in the Yukon reached its height, was also the year of the final settlement of the Alaska boundary dispute. President Roosevelt had sent troops to Alaska; the increased strength of the police stationed in the Yukon may perhaps be seen as an attempt on the part of the Canadian government to provide at least a token counterforce.

Whatever their motives, however, the police showed great flexibility in their positioning of men and detachments during the actual rush of 1897-98. Wherever a discovery of gold was made a community sprang up, and the police were among its first citizens, and its first property-owners too, for they were careful to secure a site for their post and a timber lot in each townsite. If the community looked as though it might be permanent, the police built cabins; if it did not, or if, as in the case of the posts on the passes, physical conditions prevented building a permanent post, they set up their quarters in tents. By the end of November 1899, there were thirty-three posts and 254 police stationed in the Yukon and the adjacent parts of British Columbia.

Because of the size of the force in the Yukon it was split into two divisions--"B" division, with headquarters at Dawson, and "H" division, subordinate to "B". The headquarters of "H" division were originally at Tagish, but were moved to Whitehorse when the White Pass and Yukon Railway was finished. Supt. S.B. Steele was the first

commander of "B" division (and of all the police in the Yukon); he was succeeded on September 20th 1899 by Supt. P.C.H. Primrose, while Supt. A.B. Perry assumed command of the entire Yukon on September 26th. Supt. Z.T. Wood commanded "H" division. The distribution of the force, as of November 30th 1899, was as follows:

"B" Division

Post	Supt.	Insp.	Asst. Surg.	S/Sgt.	Sgt.	Cpl.	Cst.	Sp. Cst.	Total
Dawson Post	1	3	1	3	2	5	40	9	64
Dawson Town	--	--	--	--	--	2	8	1	11
Fort Const.	--	--	--	--	--	--	2	--	2
Grand Forks	--	--	--	--	1	--	4	1	6
Indian River	--	--	--	--	--	--	3	--	3
Ogilvie	--	--	--	--	--	--	3	1	4
Half Way	--	--	--	--	--	--	2	--	2
Selwyn	--	--	--	--	--	--	2	--	2
Selkirk	--	--	--	--	--	--	2	--	2
Hotchiku	--	--	--	--	--	--	1	1	2
Stewart Riv.	--	--	--	--	--	1	2	--	3
Dominion Ck.	--	--	--	1	--	--	3	--	4
Hunker Ck.	--	--	--	1	--	--	3	1	5
On Command	1	--	--	--	--	1	1	--	3
Total	2	3	1	5	3	9	76	14	113

"H" Division

Tagish	1	1	1	4	--	3	29	4	43
Stickeen	--	--	--	--	--	1	1	--	2
Dalton Trail	--	1	1	--	--	1	6	1	10
Dalton House	--	--	--	--	--	--	1	1	2
Skagway	--	--	--	--	--	--	1	--	1
White P. Summit		--	--	--	1	--	4	--	5
Lindeman	--	--	--	--	--	--	3	--	3
Bennett	--	--	1	--	1	--	4	1	7
Caribou	--	--	--	--	--	--	2	--	2
McClintock	--	--	--	--	--	--	1	--	1
White Horse	--	--	--	--	1	--	3	--	4
Upper Labarge	--	--	--	--	--	--	3	--	3
Lower "	--	--	--	--	--	1	1	--	2
Hootalinqua	--	--	--	--	1	--	3	--	4
Big Salmon	--	--	--	--	--	--	4	--	4
Little "	--	--	--	--	--	1	2	--	3
Tantalus	--	--	--	--	--	--	3	--	3
Five Fingers	--	--	--	--	1	--	3	--	3
Dog Camp	--	--	--	--	--	--	1	--	1
On Command	--	1	--	1	1	1	26	--	30

"H" Division, continued

Post	Supt.	Insp.	Asst. Surg.	S/Sgt.	Sgt.	Cpl.	Cst.	Sp. Cst.	Total
On Leave	--	--	--	--	2	--	--	--	2
Timber Camp	--	--	--	--	--	--	5	--	5
Total	1	3	3	5	8	8	106	7	141
Total for the Yukon	3	6	4	10	11	17	182	21	254 [1]

In autumn of 1897, the rush began in earnest, for after the news of the strike became common knowledge in the south, thousands of men, especially from the western coasts of Canada and the United States, where the news was heard first, swarmed to the north. The police were thus faced with their first new challenge in the Yukon--that of the sheer numbers of gold-seekers who descended upon them. From a remove of seventy-five years it may be difficult to appreciate the furore this discovery caused. "Gold" had been a political as well as an intrinsic object of worship for twenty years, especially in the United States, and the discovery of seemingly unlimited quantities, waiting in the frozen streams to be picked up by anyone who could be bothered bending over, seemed to confirm men's hopes of a new period of prosperity. Thus all sorts of unlikely people chartered all manner of unlikely craft--for passage was at a premium--and hurried north. Little was actually known of the Yukon by the general public, especially in the United States, and the devices to make finding gold easier which were fobbed off on credulous greenhorns in Seattle and

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1 Adapted from N.W.M.P. Report 1899, III, p. 8. The original also lists animals at each detachment; there were 40 horses and 231 dogs in all.

Victoria would have done credit to P.T. Barnum. Of course the flotsam of society went north as well, those whose trade it was to "mine the miners"--the thieves, gamblers, murderers, and the "ladies of ultimate accessibility."[1] The police in the Yukon had expected a great influx of criminals, but they may not have foreseen that a great deal of their work would lie in rescuing the incompetent from the results of their own folly. Some of the Klondikers got to Dawson before the freeze-up of 1897; more got as far as Skagway or Dyea, went over the passes, and waited at Lake Bennett for the spring break-up. Many, however, took one look at the passes and turned back; others never got past the flesh-pots of Skagway.

In this transition period of 1897-98, with thousands of men poised to rush into the Yukon as soon as the weather permitted, and many more coming north by whatever means they could find, the federal government and the police braced themselves as best they could. With the word of the strike, police reinforcements were rushed north over the Chilkoot Pass, as has been seen, and new posts were opened on the passes early in 1898 to control the traffic flowing into the country. This latter action, which was done on orders from Clifford Sifton, had the by no means incidental effect of drawing a _de facto_ boundary across part of the disputed territory between the Alaska panhandle and British Columbia.

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1 The phrase is borrowed from M. Morgan, _One Man's Gold Rush_, (Seattle, 1967), p. 162.

In Regina, Commissioner Herchmer was put to work recruiting a hundred more men for Yukon service. "The most moderate estimate of the transportation companies" wrote White, "is that there will be at least 150,000 people on route to the Yukon by the end of April [1898], and Mr. Sifton wishes to get the police on the different trails in advance of the rush."[1]

In the civil sphere, the government also acted, in this instance, with considerable alacrity. This was undoubtedly due, in part at least, to the fact that the Yukon had become in 1896 the responsibility of the most energetic minister of the Laurier regime, Clifford Sifton. According to Sifton's biographer, J.W. Dafoe, the Yukon rush was "an extra duty that descended, unheralded and unforeseen" upon Sifton, "demanding immediate and exacting consideration."[2] Dafoe gives Sifton credit for working out a system of mining regulations which would be applicable to the requirements of the Yukon, and for setting up the first system of civil government for the area, which became a Territory on June 13th 1898. This was accomplished while crowds of "angry patronage-hunters swarmed about his head."[3] Sifton picked his handful of officials not from the civil service, but from the ranks of private citizens. According to Dafoe, Sifton had contempt for all bureaucrats,[4] an attitude easy

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1 White to Herchmer, 17 December 1897, Compt. Corr., v. 139. The estimate was not moderate; it was four times too high.
2 J.W. Dafoe, Clifford Sifton in Relation to His Times, (Toronto, 1931), p. 151.
3 Ibid., p. 155.
4 Ibid., pp. 155-156.

to understand in one so energetic.

In August 1897 Sifton appointed a Commissioner for the Yukon who was to act as governor of the Territory. The man selected, Major James M. Walsh,[1] was a crusty ex-N.W.M.P. officer, who had retired from the force under a cloud some fifteen years earlier.[2] Walsh and a small party of officials left for the Yukon in the autumn of 1897, along with the first main body of police reinforcements. Sifton accompanied the party, partly to reconnoitre the Yukon, and partly to investigate the feasibility of a pet project of his, the all-Canadian route to the gold fields.[3] He stayed in the north only a short time, however, turning back at Tagish, and was back in Vancouver by November 1st.

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1 James Morrow Walsh was born in Upper Canada in 1840. He joined the militia in 1866 and served with the Red River Expedition of 1870. He joined the N.W.M.P. on its formation in 1873. He retired in 1883 and went into business. He was appointed Commissioner of the Yukon in 1897 and resigned in 1898. He died in 1905.

2 During the "Yukon Scandals" of 1899, in which the Conservative opposition exposed irregularities in the granting of claims in the Yukon during Walsh's regime, and which Dafoe denounces as political character assassination of the worst kind, Sir Charles Hibbert Tupper obtained permission to interview Frederick White and to search the police papers for material concerning Walsh's career in the force. At the time of Walsh's retirement in 1883 there had been an investigation into the administration of his command, and in particular into the loss of some government property. The papers relating to the investigation had been destroyed in a fire at the East Block in February 1897. Tupper asserted that it was a common belief that Walsh had been forced to resign because of his mismanagement, but White denied this, and for lack of evidence to the contrary, Tupper was force to let the matter drop. See White's memo of 22 March 1899, Compt. Corr., v. 172.

3 Dafoe, op. cit., pp. 157 ff.

J.M. Walsh was put in command, ex officio, of all the police in the Yukon, and Commissioner Herchmer was relieved of all responsibility for them. The police were ordered to report directly to the Comptroller in Ottawa, who in turn reported to Sifton. This may be seen as an attempt to put the Yukon detachments more directly under the control of the government, and under Sifton in particular. Sifton did not wish to see the Yukon policed under a chain of command which ran from Dawson to Regina, and only then to Ottawa; it was much simpler to cut out the middle link, and to cap the whole edifice in the north with a civil administrator who was his own appointee, and who would report directly to him.[1] Commissioner Herchmer does not seem to have been pleased to have had the direction of so important a segment of the police taken abruptly out of his hands. He wrote to White expressing the hope that at least the internal business and discipline of the force would continue to be his reponsibility, but even this modest request was denied by Sifton, who wrote to White, "Yes, administrator [Walsh] will be commanding officer, and all matters relating to the force must be referred to him unless he dispenses therewith."[2]

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1 It is likely that the attempt of the Territorial government in Regina to assert authority over the Yukon in the matter of granting liquor licenses contributed to Sifton's decision to bypass that city entirely.

2 Marginal note on letter drafted by White to Herchmer, 25 September 1897, Compt. Corr., v. 172.

At any rate, Walsh did not last very long in his job. He was delayed at Skagway in the autumn of 1897 until the weather was too bad for travel, and did not reach Dawson until the end of May 1898. By the end of July he had resigned and gone home. Although Dafoe describes him as "easy-going," "well-intentioned and disinterested,"[1] he seems to have been irascible and hard to get along with. His reason for resigning was a fit of injured pride; it was

> . . . the result of Major Walsh's indignation upon learning that without consulting him a detachment of Mounted Police, under the command of Superintendent Steele, had been sent in from the outside to take possession of the summit of the passes. Mr. Sifton had to explain that this was an act of emergency to forestall the Americans . . . Major Walsh had not been consulted because he was thought to be at the time in Dawson.[2]

Walsh was eventually replaced by William Ogilvie, the veteran of the Yukon, who handled his duties ably, and got on well with the police. Walsh, in fact, seems to have held the belief, no doubt heretical in the eyes of the police, that the men of the N.W.M.P. were not suitable for service in the Yukon at all. In a report to Ottawa he recommended

> . . . that the men required for service in this country be not drawn from the North-West Mounted Police force. I find them unsuitable for the work that is to be done. They are neither boatmen, axemen, nor are they accustomed to winter bush life, three of the first qualifications for service here . . . In their place should be called volunteers for two or three years' service in the Yukon district. They could be drawn from the districts along the Ottawa, St. Lawrence, and other rivers where men are accustomed to

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1 Dafoe, op. cit., p. 177.
2 Ibid., p. 180.

> swift water, and to bush life . . . In command of these should be placed one of the most competent young officers of the Mounted Police, and the remaining officers could be appointed from militia officers who have had the same experience. [1]

If echoes of Walsh's desire to set up a private force under his authority in the Yukon reached the ears of the police, it is little wonder that he was not popular, and that the police chafed under his control.

With the police reinforcements was sent in a new commander, Sam Steele,[2] who was widely regarded as the trouble-shooter for the police; Constantine was relieved, although his association with the Yukon was not yet over.

At the same time, the government, realizing that the challenge which now faced the police and the general situation which threatened to develop in the Yukon amounted to an emergency, made plans to send a body of soldiers north to assist the police. A battalion of men, known as the Yukon Field Force, was sent north in the summer of 1898, establishing a post at Selkirk. The force comprised about two hundred all ranks, made up of men from the Canadian Army. Significantly, they came not by the regular route, across Alaska, but by an all-Canadian route, north from Telegraph Creek on the Stikine River. Their job was to assist the police in some of their civil functions, es-

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1 Reports from Commissioner Walsh, Canada, Sessional Paper no. 38B, 1898, p. 29.

2 It was at this time that the two divisions were set up. Steele commanded "B" division, and was responsible for "H" division, though he did not command it directly.

pecially escorting shipments of gold out of the country. As Superintendent P.C.H. Primrose reported from Dawson, they "assisted us by furnishing sentries in the guardroom, and Bank of Commerce, head office, gold escorts, and sometimes prisoners' escorts, which duties, with the small numbers of our men in Dawson, it would have been impossible for us to perform."[1] The Yukon Field Force came under the authority of the Commissioner of the Yukon, to whom the police applied when assistance was required at various posts. Fifty-three members of the field force were stationed permanently at Dawson, giving the police help which was urgently needed. "The officers are a pleasant addition to our mess," Supt. Steele reported, "and the whole force works in harmony with us. The men are a fine athletic well trained lot, reflecting great credit on the country."[2] The entire Yukon Field Force remained in the country for a year, and half of it for two years. Its assistance to the police, by the police's own report, was essential and invaluable, especially in the performance of some of their more pedestrian duties.

Once the police arrived in force in the Yukon, it was not long before they were involved in all aspects of Yukon life, making their presence felt wherever activity, legal or otherwise, was taking place. It was as if Steele and his men were determined to avoid the example of Skagway,

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1 N.W.M.P. Report 1899, B, p. 53. See also A.L. Disher, "The Long March of the Yukon Field Force," The Beaver, Autumn 1962, pp. 4-15.

2 N.W.M.P. Report 1898, III, p. 24.

which was generally cited as the horrible result of what was likely to happen in an unpoliced society. In his autobiography, Steele described Skagway as a northern Sodom: "At night the crash of bands, shouts of 'murder', cries for help mingled with the cracked voices of the singers in the variety halls; and the wily 'box-rushers' . . . cheated the tenderfeet."[1] "The town of Skagway at this time . . . was little better than a hell upon earth."[2] The motif of the evils of Skagway occurs often enough in the police correspondence and reports to lead to the belief that the police were consciously using it as a point of contrast from which their own success in the Yukon might be measured. According to Steele, for example, the tempo of lawlessness increased as one approached the Canadian border, and then it ceased: "murder, robbery, and petty theft were of common occurrence, the 'shell game' could be seen at every turn of the trail, operations being pushed with the utmost vigour, so as not to loose [sic] the golden opportunity which they would be unable to find or take advantage of on the other side of the line in British territory."[3] This comparison reaches the height of lyricism in the work of later writers on the police, notably Harwood Steele, Sam's son, who described the same scene thus:

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1 S.B. Steele, op. cit., p. 296.
2 Steele, in N.W.M.P. Report 1898, p. 4.
3 Ibid.

> . . . straining, out of Hell, through Purgatory, the human chain kept moving--Till suddenly, a long-familiar flag blazed out, a star of Hope, in the grey skies above the summit [of the Chilkoot Pass]. And there at last were the gates of Paradise and the angels who kept it safe: The red-coats holding the passes for the North-West Mounted Police. [1]

Of course, the police were on the passes for a much more prosaic purpose than keeping the "gates of Paradise." They were there to collect customs duties and to establish Canadian control over the passes--which control was of necessity de facto, since the boundary question was at that time not settled. The police performed the actual customs duties on the passes for only a brief period, from February 1898, when the posts were established, to June 30th of that year, when civilian officials arrived to take over the duties, though of course the police remained on the passes to enforce the various regulations.[2]

There was a bit of trouble at first with the Americans in this connection. An order had been issued by the American government requiring all goods bought in Canada to be convoyed from Skagway to the Yukon by an American official, who was to be paid eight dollars a day for his trouble. Furthermore, these convoys were to proceed as far as Lake Bennett. As soon as the police had established themselves on the passes, they began turning back the convoys at those points. This caused some minor friction, which ceased only

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1 Harwood Steele, Policing the Arctic, (London, 1936), p. 22.
2 N.W.M.P. Report 1898, III, p. 47. The previous customs post, opened in September 1897, was at Tagish, on the Yukon waterway.

on May 15th 1898, when the Americans abandoned the convoy system.[1]

There was some grumbling from the gold-seekers when the customs post was set up on the Chilkoot Pass; Inspector R. Belcher, in command, reported "great indignation among a certain class at Sheep Camp, Dyea, etc. . . . a number of meetings held . . . loud talk," but no action from the dissidents.[2] The main trouble at the passes was the weather, which was so bad that the police had great difficulty simply checking the goods passing through, collecting customs, and issuing receipts to be shown at the Tagish post. Goods were checked and receipted as they were taken off the pass. From February 26th until June 30th 1898, nearly $175,000 was collected, under very trying conditions.[3]

While providing a haven for crime-weary travellers, and a source of income for the government, the police were also busy laying the physical foundations of their authority in the Yukon. Detachments were quickly set up on the various gold-bearing creeks, down the length of the Yukon River, and at all points of entry into the District. It did not take the police long to introduce a routine into their Yukon service. This was significant, for it was not only the spectacular part of police duty which consolidated their

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1 N.W.M.P. Report 1898, III, p. 47. See also chapter V, below.
2 Ibid., p. 93.
3 Ibid., p. 94.

authority in the area; a steady bureaucratic routine was also important. Thus, in cooperation with the Commissioner of the Yukon, a flood of territorial orders and police general orders were promulgated and sent out, with the object of regularizing society as much as possible. All sorts of matters came under the scrutiny of the police, from the reporting of deaths[1] to the problem of false weights and measures used by merchants for weighing gold.[2] The indefatigable Sam Steele settled down to a routine which would have killed a less energetic man. His description of his working day is worth quoting as an example of what was expected of an officer of the N.W.M.P. in the Yukon at the time:

> . . . my working hours were at least nineteen. I retired to rest about 2 a.m. or later, rose at six, was out of doors at seven, walked five miles for exercise between that hour and eight, two and a half miles up the Klondyke on the ice and back over the mountain, visited every institution under me each day, sat on boards and committees until midnight, attended to the routine of the Yukon command without an adjutant, saw every prisoner daily, and was in the town station at midnight to see how things were going.[3]

The minutiae of an organization as large as the N.W.M.P had to be attended to in the Yukon as much as in any other place. Orders were sent out, investigations made, reports

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1 The partner of the deceased was required to make the report. R.C.M.P. papers, Yukon Records, General Yukon Orders, Public Archives of Canada, RG 18, D-2, (hereafter Yukon Ord.), v. 12.

2 N.W.M.P. Report 1897, p. 313.

3 S.B. Steele, op. cit., p. 324.

submitted. Since the police in the Yukon were entirely without clerical assistance, the arteries of red tape frequently became clogged as a result of the inexperience or indifference of the police at the various detachments. Frequent orders were sent out from Dawson to the effect that the reports coming in from the detachments were highly unsatisfactory, and numerous threats of disciplinary action were made.[1]

At the detachments, which normally comprised two to four men, the police, although expected to show initiative, were by no means left to their own devices. Each detachment had a prescribed daily routine; the one for the post at Lake Bennett in October 1898 is typical:

Reveille	6:30 a.m.
Morning stables	7:00
Breakfast	7:30
Fatigue	8:30 or as may be required
Noon stables	11:30
Dinner	12:30 p.m.
Fatigue or exercise	2:30 or as may be necessary
Evening stables	4:30
Supper	5:30
Last post (roll call)	10:00
Lights out	10:15

[2]

This rigorous schedule, which does not include the police duties which were a part of every day, such as customs and general criminal work, was of course modified depending on circumstances. Some of the detachments had no horses (that at Lake Bennett had only two), a fact which lightened the work considerably. Those detachments which were concerned

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1 Yukon Ord., v. 12.
2 Ibid.

chiefly with customs or postal work would have followed a somewhat different roster of duties.

In many aspects of their work the N.W.M.P. found themselves to an increasing extent involved in affairs which had little or nothing to do with the keeping of the peace. It would seem that they sometimes were selected for tasks because they were best qualified to do them; in other cases, such as the customs service, it is to be supposed that they were picked merely because they could do the job with as little cost to the government as possible. An example of the police being given a job because of their qualifications was the matter of the trails to the Yukon, a challenge to the police which was essentially physical.

The question of the overland routes to the Yukon is a strange mixture of patriotism and economic self-interest, with the latter strongly bolstering the former. Almost from the moment it became apparent that there would be a rush to the Yukon, every Canadian and American community which had any pretensions of being a terminus or a way-station on a route to the gold fields began to trumpet its advantages to the world. Victoria and Seattle, as the starting points for the water routes to the Yukon, were intense rivals, and with other Pacific towns such as San Francisco, shared most of the traffic. But early in the rush the clamour arose for an "all-Canadian route." Why, it was asked, should Canadians have to submit to American tax-gatherers on their way to the Yukon? So said the merchants

of Edmonton, at the time an insignificant town almost literally on the edge of nowhere. The Edmonton Bulletin warned that the lack of an all-Canadian route was leaving the Yukon to be picked off by Americans, who thought that "if the United States does not own the earth, the United States certainly should."[1] Popular enthusiasm for the route rose to such a pitch that Clifford Sifton, who was not deaf to appeals from the west, ordered the police to explore the route with a view to opening it as a wagon and pack trail for the Klondikers. The task was entrusted to Inspector J.D. Moodie, who left Edmonton in September 1897. His journey, via the headwaters of the Pelly River, which lasted over fourteen months, was a nightmare, and when he and his party finally reached Tagish in November 1898, most people concluded that the route was impractical.[2] Yet the Bulletin, at the end of August 1897, was congratulating itself over the number of people who had used one or other of the routes; 102 had left since mid-June, having spent over $250 each in town outfitting themselves.[3] J.G. MacGregor, in a recently published study of the Edmonton routes, lists about sixteen hundred people who used them, of whom about seven hundred apparently reached the gold fields, though not until the rush was over.[4] The old idea

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1 5 August 1897.

2 A full account of the patrol is in N.W.M.P. Report 1898, II. Moodie was criticized in some quarters for having picked the wrong route, and for general incompetence. The report shows his obstacles to have been all but overwhelming.

3 30 August 1897.

4 J.G. MacGregor, The Klondike Rush Through Edmonton, (Toronto, 1970), p. 235.

that only a handful of gold seekers were successful in following these incredibly roundabout routes would now seem to be in need of revision. The police do not seem to have given way to the rather natural tendency to think of themselves as sacrifices to Edmonton's cupidity; rather, they regarded Moodie's patrol as heroic proof of what they were capable of. As will be seen presently, it was administrative and clerical burdens which most enraged them.

A second popular all-Canadian route was from the Stickine River north through central British Columbia, following the abandoned telegraph route which had been blazed thirty years before. G.M. Dawson had spoken in favour of the route, and early in 1898 the government entered into an agreement with the railroad builders Mackenzie and Mann to build a line from Telegraph Creek to Teslin Lake.[1] But nothing came of this project, for it was defeated by the Conservatives in the Senate. Sifton, who had backed it strongly, was enraged by its defeat. Even Commissioner Walsh was furious; he wrote to Sifton "It is an outrage that party prejudice can be permitted to commit so villainous an act. It is treason of the blackest kind."[2] But the plan was impractical anyway, for the realities of geography were not to be denied by political boundaries, at least not insofar as choosing the most practicable route

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1 Compt. Corr., v. 146.

2 J.W. Dafoe, op. cit., p. 165. This casts light on Walsh's political orientation. Dafoe discusses the political aspect of the scheme at some length.

for a railway to the Yukon was concerned. The police, however, were involved only peripherally in this Canadian Yukon Railway project. Two schemes which did concern them were the establishment of Dalton's Trail, an easier route over the coastal mountains, and the Peace River Trail expedition, coincidently another sop to Edmonton. There is, of course, another side to this matter. These expeditions, though they did not open up a royal road to the Yukon, did serve to explore a good deal of territory about which the government knew little or nothing--the Pelly River region, for instance--and, as always where the police were concerned, at little or no extra cost to the government and the taxpayer.

It was probably in 1898 that the police performed their most remarkable service in the Yukon, for that was the year of the main "rush" from the south, when most of the people who had commenced their trip in the previous year either reached their goal or gave up trying. In this year the police responded to a bewildering variety of challenges in the new Territory, many of them exceeding their original expectations, and some exceeding their authority as well. This last is easily shown by three examples.

In the spring of 1898, a motley collection of boats lay on the shores of Lakes Bennett and Lindeman, waiting for the break-up of ice to permit downstream passage to Dawson. Unfortunately for the Klondikers, two major sets

of rapids lay in their path, at White Horse and at Miles Canyon. The inexperienced gold seekers attempted these dangerous rapids in their crazy boats, once the ice disappeared, without guides and without much common sense. Several men were drowned, whereupon Steele, who was by then in command, began a system of registration for the boats, and set rules for the passage of all craft through Miles Canyon. In this latter case he acted quite arbitrarily. His much-quoted speech to the Klondikers on this occasion ran, in part, as follows: "There are many of your countrymen who have said that the Mounted Police make the laws as they go along, and I am going to do so now, for your own good."[1]

A somewhat similar instance comes from November of the same year, and had to do with the problem of destitute men in the Territory. In the winter of 1897-98 there had been a considerable danger in Dawson that food supplies would be totally insufficient to feed the population. Although the reality did not extend to actual starvation, there was some hardship. A repetition was feared for the following winter, especially since the population was then much greater than in the previous year. The police were especially apprehensive, for lack of food inevitably meant disorder, while the destitute, for lack of anywhere else to go, generally applied to the police for the aid they could not

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1 Quoted in Pierre Berton, op. cit., p. 281.

always afford to give. It was also difficult to distinguish between real and counterfeit cases of need. Hence, on November 18th 1898, Steele issued a proclamation stating that no one would be allowed to enter the Yukon without satisfying the police that he had with him two month's provisions and $500 in cash, or six month's provisions and $200 in cash. Notices to this effect were posted in Skagway and the main coastal cities of Canada and the United States.[1] This ruling was quite illegal, as the Department of Justice informed Sifton the following July. Steele was told that his actions were illegal, but that this fact should not be made public.[2] By July 1899, or course, the rush had abated, the new railway was well on its way to Whitehorse, and the ruling was no longer necessary.

An earlier instance of arbitrary action on the part of the police occurred under Constantine, when he had posted on a store in Dawson a notice which read: "This store has been appropriated by the government for the purpose of regulating the transportation of unprovided people, and is declared closed for mercantile purposes for the day."[3] This is a rather mysterious episode; no reference to it other than the piece of paper upon which the notice was written has been found. Why Constantine

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1 A copy is in the possession of the present writer. This was not the first such order; a similar one had been issued early in 1898 by the Commissioner of the Yukon, requiring a year's provisions. N.W.M.P. Report 1898, III, p. 21.

2 Compt. Corr., v. 159.

3 n.d., Constantine Papers, v. 3.

picked that particular store, and what was meant by "regulating the transportation" are not clear. Presumably what was meant was the issuing of supplies to the destitute in order to get them out of the country. A store would be picked for convenience; the police would have to purchase supplies for these people (they often complained of having to do this) and the store would be the easiest place from which to issue supplies.

Can these actions be justified, pragmatically and in law? The police were faced with a difficult situation, and the actions they took were undoubtedly in the best interests of all concerned. Yet is it not a dangerous precedent to take such action, baldly admitting that the police are "making up the laws as they go along?" These were not cases of flexible interpretation of the law; this is done by all police forces, and was to be expected in the Yukon. These were matters of actual invention of non-existent law to fit a certain situation. The police should presumably try to be even farther above suspicion than Caesar's wife, especially in this respect. On the other hand it might be argued that extraordinary conditions require extraordinary measures; that the measures were not put into effect with the blessing of Ottawa; and that they, or at least the more flagrant examples, were officially discouraged when brought to the attention of the government. Yet they still leave the historian with an uneasy feeling. Perhaps they may be explained most easily by saying that

neither the police nor any other branch of officialdom at that time was as sensitive to the many nuances of civil liberties as their counterparts are today, and the police must, in fairness, be judged by the political theories prevailing in Canada in 1900, which were more authoritarian than those of our own time. It is a question of "climate of opinion." Indeed, although these are extreme examples, a great deal of the police work in the Yukon consisted of exercising a more-or-less benevolent control over the safety of others, men who were too foolish or too careless to look after themselves. From this situation a feeling of paternalism was naturally bound to develop.

The police were very directly involved in the economic conditions of the Yukon during the gold rush period. In the first place, their operations were sometimes hampered by the scarcity of material of all kinds, and they were forced to make adjustments in their methods to meet these new circumstances. Transportation, which had never been easy, became even more difficult with the onset of the rush. The price of feed for horses increased so much that many of them were killed for dog food, so that when Constantine on one occasion tried to hire a team to haul wood, he found the rate was an incredible $150 a day. The result of this inflation was that the police had to do their own hauling of wood with dog teams.[1] Much complaining resulted.

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1 This occurred towards the end of 1897. N.W.M.P. Report 1897, p. 307.

The law of supply and demand soon made itself felt on the food supply of the district as well, and the police were involved in an incident in which fear of starvation caused many people to flee Dawson in the late autumn of 1897. At that time supplies of food in Dawson were so low that it was the opinion of Constantine and others that there was a strong possibility of disaster. Notices were posted in Dawson warning the miners that the only solution to the problem was

> . . . an immediate move down the river of all those who are unsupplied to Fort Yukon, where there is a large stock of provisions [this was not true] . . . It is absolutely hazardous to build hopes upon the arrival of other boats . . . to remain here any longer is to court death from starvation or . . . a certainty of sickness from scurvy or other troubles. Starvation now stares every man in the face who is hoping and waiting for outside relief. [1]

Some men did leave, but the shortage of supplies, though real enough, did not prove as serious as had at first been feared. For a time, however, Constantine was compelled to ration his men to a diet of three-quarters of a pound of flour and four ounces of bacon a day.[2]

At one point a committee of miners and other citizens asked Constantine to take upon himself more power than he already had. On October 29th 1897, a group calling itself the "Committee of the Yukon Chamber of Mining and Commerce"

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1 An original, undated copy of this notice, signed by D.W. Davis, Collector of Customs, and T. Fawcett, Gold Commissioner, is in Constantine Papers, v. 3. Constantine did not sign the note, but his opinion of the situation was the same.

2 N.W.M.P. Report 1897, p. 308.

presented a petition to Constantine which complained that speculators were taking advantage of the scarcity of food and supplies to raise prices to an unfair level. Constantine was requested to take steps to meet "the immediate prime evil before us," and specifically, to "establish standard selling values" for all goods in Dawson. This request for price-fixing seems a bit odd, in the light of the group from which it came, some of them presumably merchants and businessmen; it gives an insight into the reasons why there was so little complaint about the arbitrary actions taken by the police. From the beginning the Klondikers looked on the police as more than simply law-enforcement officers and public officials. They expected them to be custodians of the public will--arbiters of social justice and solvers of problems of all sorts as well. These expectations were generally fulfilled; in this case, however, Constantine felt that matters, though serious, were not grave enough to require such stringent measures. He rejected the committee's petition, remarking that "the time for this has not arrived, nor do I think it will."[1]

The general question of their own supplies vexed the police during this period of their service in the Yukon. Shipping supplies over the mountain passes was almost prohibitively expensive, and some of the cargo shipped the regular way, up the Yukon River from St. Michael's, on one occasion in the autumn of 1897 was taken off by hungry

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1 The correspondence is in Constantine Papers, v. 3.

miners at Circle City. The problem of supplying the police in the Yukon was as much as anything a matter of establishing priorities with the shipping companies. It was necessary to cajole the firms which shipped goods up the Yukon River to give police goods preference over those of civilians. The police were frequently successful in doing so, for the steamship companies were anxious to obtain and keep licences to import liquor and sell it to their passengers. The preferential treatment received by the police caused a good deal of grumbling--"the companies because they say they are losing money, the miners because the police seem to get so much, and the police because they do not get more [supplies]."[1] This problem tended to solve itself over the next year with the great increase of freight transported to the Yukon. Supplies never did become cheap, though they did become considerably more plentiful.

In their enforcement of the law, the officers of the police, in private correspondence and their official reports, generally expressed a rather ambivalent attitude towards Yukon society. On the one hand they were fond of referring to large segments of the population as the dregs of society; Constantine's celebrated phrase "the sweepings of the slums and the result of a general jail delivery,"[2] might be taken

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1 N.W.M.P. Report 1897, p. 309.

2 "A considerable number of the people coming in from the Sound cities appear to be the sweepings of the slums and the result of a general jail delivery." Ibid.

as an example. On the other hand, the same officers were fond of pointing out how safe Dawson was for the law-abiding citizen; that a man carrying a six-shooter would look as odd in Dawson as he would in Ottawa.[1] Although the second observation was true, the first one was exaggerated, and reveals not only a tendency to magnify existing difficulties, but a certain arrogance as well. The difference between the two statements, one made in 1897 and the other in 1899, also reflects to a certain extent the results of two years' hard police work. Certainly there were bad characters in the Yukon, but Constantine, in his reports, seems almost to exaggerate their numbers and influence. A.N.C. Treadgold, the English mining expert who wrote a guide to the Klondike in 1898, gives a rather different picture of the type of man found in the Yukon. He divides them into seven categories, of which the "scum of all classes and trades and nations" was by no means the largest.[2]

However, it is clear that the news of the discovery of gold in 1896 did bring to the Yukon a goodly number of criminals--thieves, gamblers, bootleggers and prostitutes--and it is more than likely that the police tended to over-emphasize their numbers in the community if only because they had so much to do with them. Indeed, in the late

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1 N.W.M.P. Report 1899, B, pp. 3-4.
2 A.N.C. Treadgold, Report on the Gold Fields of the Klondike, (London, 1899), pp. 73-75.

summer of 1897, it seemed to Constantine as if the Yukon were undergoing a minor crime wave. The community spirit which had formerly prevailed among the miners disappeared with the influx of those, honest or dishonest, who were not accustomed to the old code of ethics. Formerly, miners had been able to leave their supplies cached on the trails in perfect safety, but with the advent of the Klondikers, "a man has to sit on his cache with a shotgun."[1] At first Constantine simply told petty criminals to leave the country, since it was simpler, though illegal, to throw them out than to feed them in jail. Many others were simply and summarily barred from entering the country, at the discretion of the police. After the quarters in Dawson were completed, the police applied corrective therapy to thieves in the form of ten hours' work per day on the enormous woodpile behind the barracks.

Although crimes were committed on the creeks and the trails, most of them, except for smuggling and bootlegging, took place in the settlements, especially in Dawson. The police tended in some respects to take a pragmatic view of this crime. Given the social conditions in Dawson, it seemed to the police that the eradication of gambling and prostitution was patently impossible; indeed, perhaps it was even undesireable, despite the protestations of the

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1 N.W.M.P. Report 1897, p. 309.

local clergy to the contrary.[1] If vice was too prevalent, too popular, and perhaps too essential, to suppress, then it should at least be kept under control and honest. This was the attitude adopted by the police. To this end the prostitutes were herded into their own ghetto, much to the rage of the citizens who lived there already, and were later deported across the river to Klondike City, or "Lousetown." Women were forbidden to drink in saloons, and no liquor was to be served in dancehalls. All gambling was forbidden which involved the "house" getting a percentage of the stake; institutionalized gambling was thus prevented. Licences were issued to saloons, of which there were sixteen in Dawson in 1899, at a cost of $2,500 each.[2] These measures gave the police control to a considerable extent over all these operations, without making it necessary for them to be abolished altogether. Eventually, it must be admitted, gambling was forbidden entirely, but this development, much desired by upright citizens, did not come until after 1901, when the issue was no longer of major importance in the Yukon. As late as 1902 gamblers

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1 Z.T. Wood to Rev. John Pringle of Bonanza, 25 April 1902, R.C.M.P. papers, Yukon Records, Dawson City Letterbooks, Public Archives of Canada, RG 18, D-1, (hereafter Dawson Lbks.), v.5. This was in reply to a complaint which is not extant.

2 The Territorial government in Regina successfully claimed the authority to issue licences for the Yukon and did so until the Yukon was made a separate Territory. See John A. Bovey, "The Attitudes and Policies of the Federal Government towards Canada's Northern Territories, 1870-1930," (M.A. thesis, University of British Columbia, 1967). Also C.E.S. Franks, "How the Sabbath Came to the Yukon," Canadian Public Administration, X, 1967.

were still being arrested and fined, but on a small scale,[1] and even in 1905 the officer commanding, Assistant Commissioner Z.T. Wood, reported that there were several men in the Yukon who hoped that the vanished prosperity would return and the police leave, so that they could "fleece and rob the unwary to their hearts' content."[2]

The conclusion is inescapable that the police tended to regard the laws as something to be applied for the citizens' "own good." Again and again the paternalism which the police exercised may be shown by example--a paternalism strange to any American frontier settlement, but the rule in the Yukon. In keeping with this paternalism, the police decided which laws were worthy of enforcement and which were not, and to what extent. The police looked tolerantly on vice which was conducted in an orderly manner. But the toleration went further than this, for there is some evidence that a "hands off" policy was adopted, at least for a time, by the police officials. In this respect a letter of April 19th 1901 from Assistant Commissioner Z.T. Wood[3] to the officer in command of "H" division at Whitehorse is quite significant. At Whitehorse it had been the custom to arrest and fine gamblers and prostitutes every

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1 Dawson Lbks., v. 5.

2 R.N.W.M.P. Report 1905, III, A, p. 26.

3 Zachary Taylor Wood was born in the United States in 1861. He attended Royal Military College, served in the 1885 rebellion, and joined the N.W.M.P. as an Inspector the same year. He served in the Yukon from 1897 to 1912. He was made Companion of the Order of St. Michael and St. George in 1913 and died on leave in 1915. His son, S.T. Wood, was later Commissioner of the R.C.M.P.

month, but, wrote Wood, "as this practice has been the subject matter of a great many complaints . . . stating that the fining of these people . . . is a source of revenue . . . and virtually licensing them, it was stopped here some time ago, and that class of people ignored unless they openly infringed the laws. You will please act in like manner."[1] For "openly infringe the laws" we may read "make a public spectacle of themselves and openly infringe the laws which the police intend to enforce."

Orders to this effect came directly from Clifford Sifton, who had been under pressure to stamp out immorality in Dawson. Typical of the protests reaching him was a letter from Mrs. Kate Heaman, head of the Social Purity Department of the London, Ontario, W.C.T.U. She implored Sifton, "For the sake of our Motherhood, for the sake of our sisterhood, for the sake of our boyhood" to suppress the evil of prostitution in Dawson, as a "disgrace to our Christian civilization."[2] Sifton had already asked Commissioner Ogilvie if it was true that prostitutes were being issued medical certificates;[3] Ogilvie explained what had happened:

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1 Dawson Lbks., v. 4.
2 Letter of 27 June 1900, Canada, Department of the Interior, Northern Administration Branch Papers, Public Archives of Canada, RG 85, (hereafter Int. N.A.B.), v. 658, f. 3418.
3 Sifton to Ogilvie, 6 January 1900, ibid.

> . . . procedure adopted only after discussion in Council . . . There was a great deal of [venereal] sickness . . . an order was made that all harlots should be examined by a physician every month and should exhibit in their rooms certificates of health. . . . it was recognized that it was illegal and was giving these characters a certain lawful standing but it was deemed in the best interests of the community to do so. . . . On the receipt of your telegram the practice was ordered discontinued; but . . . the women keep the practice up, considering it in their interest to do so.[1]

In August 1900 Sifton ordered Ogilvie to suppress gambling entirely,[2] but the Yukon Territorial Council objected that "vice would be very much worse practiced secretly"[3] and that it would be unfair to deprive the owners of gaming houses of their invested capital. Petitions from Dawson businessmen supported this position. Sifton was adamant, however, and the semi-official recognition of vice ceased in the spring of 1901, to be replaced for a time by the tacit toleration mentioned above.

Of course, this distinction between crimes to be tolerated or ignored, and crimes to be punished, was made not only in the Yukon; the distinction was and is made by all law-enforcement bodies. Yet there is something almost unique in the situation in which the N.W.M.P. found themselves here; to wink at the activities of the very class of people against whom the official reports thundered year

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1 Ogilvie to Sifton, 14 May 1900, Int. N.A.B., v. 658, f. 3418.
2 Sifton to Ogilvie, 14 August 1900, ibid.
3 Ogilvie to Sifton, 12 September 1900, ibid.

after year--and moreover, without any ulterior motive of personal profit such as usually explains such behaviour. It is likely that the police and the Yukon government had no choice in the matter; paternalistic as they were, they were not strong enough to go against the wishes of the greater part of the Klondikers to enjoy a more open society than existed in the south--at least in southern Canada. Admittedly, most of the gaming houses were eventually closed down, but not until the prosperity which had supported them had largely disappeared.

The Canadian sociologist S.D. Clark, in The Developing Canadian Community, makes an interesting comment on the gambling and prostitution prevalent in Dawson. He suggests that the older system of the miners' meeting was more effective in controlling these people than were the police, since the "suitable sanctions" imposed by the miners had been highly effective in regulating their activities:

> . . . the activities of these parasitical groups . . . were not recognized, except within the criminal code, in the system of Canadian cultural values which had been imported [by the police] from without. The formal machinery of the state proved highly effective in dealing with the depradations of the criminal, but efforts to treat the activities of gamblers and prostitutes as crimes resulted in releasing such people from the more effective controls of the informal community. [1]

This reasoning seems faulty on two points. It may be true that the "informal community" was effective in controlling this element before the rush, but the miners' meeting and

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1 S.D. Clark, The Developing Canadian Community, (Toronto, 1962), p. 94. See also chapter V, below.

the old community as a whole was not equal to the rush of 1897-98; the old system could never have controlled large numbers of unruly people, and would have broken down even if the police had not superseded it. And, as shown above, the police did not treat gamblers and prostitutes merely as criminals; they recognized them as an inevitable part of Yukon society, at least while the rush was on, and sought chiefly to keep their activities as discreet and honest as possible. Thus the police did not release these people from effective control, as Professor Clark implies; quite the reverse was the case.

Of serious crime there was never very much in the Yukon. There were a few murders, spectacular cases which held the attention of the entire country. All were solved by the police. It was not a good country for murderers; as A.N.C. Treadgold put it, the police were "rapid, simple, severe in their methods."[1] As has been learned then and later, the north is not really a good place to hide. The

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1 A.N.C. Treadgold, op. cit., p. 69. An example of the treatment given hard characters is Supt. P.C.H. Primrose's account of conditions in the Dawson jail: " . . . some half dozen hard cases have marred an otherwise good record, but remembering the class of prisoners we have had to deal with, the scum and outlaws of the Coast cities, stern discipline and heavy punishments, had the desired effect. In two cases of rank insubordination, I placed the offenders in irons . . . and this degradation, coupled with five days bread and water, regulated them to the required obedience, and had a good effect upon others." N.W.M.P. Report 1899, II, B, p. 44.

few exits from the Yukon were closely and constantly guarded, and it was all but impossible to live off the land. The police kept careful track of the movements of suspicious characters, and frequently advised them to leave the country even when they were innocent of any proven crime. Thus crimes which all parts of Yukon society (except presumably the criminals) felt were undesireable, were conspicuous chiefly by their absence. The comparison which the police made between the sink of iniquity at Skagway and the model of good order at Dawson spoke volumes for "what a motley throng can achieve under British institutions."[1]

The actual crime statistics for the Yukon in the year ending November 30th 1899 show the kinds of offences which were the most common. The considerable variety does not, it should be noted, include any mention of gambling or prostitution.

Crime and Offence	Convicted[2]	Fined	Discharged	Awaiting Trial	Total[3]
Murder	5	--	--	--	6
Manslaughter	--	--	1	--	1
Attempt to rob and kill	1	--	--	--	1
Assault	8	13	5	2	28
Blackmail	--	1	--	--	1
Destruction of property	1	--	--	--	1
Intimidating a witness	--	--	1	--	1
Attempted suicide	1	--	--	--	1
Attempted escape from jail	1	--	--	--	1
Embezzlement	1	--	--	--	1

1 A.N.C. Treadgold, op. cit., p. 70.
2 Convicted and jailed, hanged, or died.
3 Includes cases not yet solved.

Crime and Offence	Convicted	Fined	Discharged	Awaiting Trial	Total
Theft and attempted escape from jail	1	--	--	--	1
Theft	60	2	67	5	138
Receiving stolen property	3	--	5	2	10
Perjury	--	--	11	1	12
Bribery	2	--	--	--	2
Forgery	--	--	1	--	1
Passing counterfeit money	--	--	--	1	1
Horse stealing	--	--	1	--	1
Smuggling	--	1	1	--	2
Conspiring to deprive of liberty	--	--	5	--	5
Fraud	5	3	16	1	30
False Pretences	--	--	3	--	3
Rape	--	--	3	--	3
Abduction	--	--	1	--	1
Mutiny on a river steamer	--	--	14	--	14
Mischief	1	--	--	--	1
Attempt to shoot	--	2	--	--	2
Carrying a concealed weapon	--	2	--	--	2
Obstructing a peace officer	1	1	2	--	4
Drunk and disorderly	24	319	9	--	352
Fighting	--	16	--	--	16
Committing a nuisance	--	39	2	--	41
Obstruction of sidewalks	--	3	--	--	3
Setting bush fires	--	1	--	--	1
Refusing to work at fire	--	2	1	--	3
Cruelty to animals	--	3	--	--	3
Selling bad food	--	2	--	--	2
Selling liquor out of hours	--	1	--	--	1
Cutting wood without permit	--	3	3	--	3
Contempt of court	--	--	4	--	4
Capias proceedings	--	--	18	(on payment of judgement)	18
Refusing to pay royalty	--	--	1	--	1
Lunatics	19	--	--	--	19
Total	130	414	176	12	744 [1]

The police were also responsible for enforcing the bylaws of Dawson, and spent part of their time prosecuting people for riding bicycles on sidewalks (for by 1901 Dawson had sidewalks), or for practising medicine without a license.[2]

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1 N.W.M.P. Report 1899, II, pp. 42-43.
2 Dawson Lbks., v. 5.

They were generally lenient about enforcing the Sunday blue laws because of the brevity of the working season.[1] Once the rush was over, they even had time to form a brass band, which was much in demand at civic functions. In the autumn of 1903 they gave an exhibit of arms at the Dawson fair, and put on display some flowers from their garden. In short, as the Territory became more domesticated, the police developed all the civic virtues of the police forces to the south.

The challenges faced by the police in the gold rush period were such as to tax their resources almost to the limit. The sheer weight of numbers of the Klondikers compelled the police to exercise not only their energy, but also their ingenuity. The various innovations and expedients resorted to by the police were indicative of their flexibility in response to the new problems which they encountered in the Yukon. Sometimes these solutions were extra-legal, such as the police answer to the question of how to avoid widespread starvation in the Klondike in 1898, but they were as a rule effective. They also played a critical role in shaping the development of the Territory. While these challenges were in the pattern of traditional police duty, along with them were arising a number of quite different ones, this time in the civil sphere, which were to give the police a taste of duties they were not much used to, and to which they did not respond quite so well.

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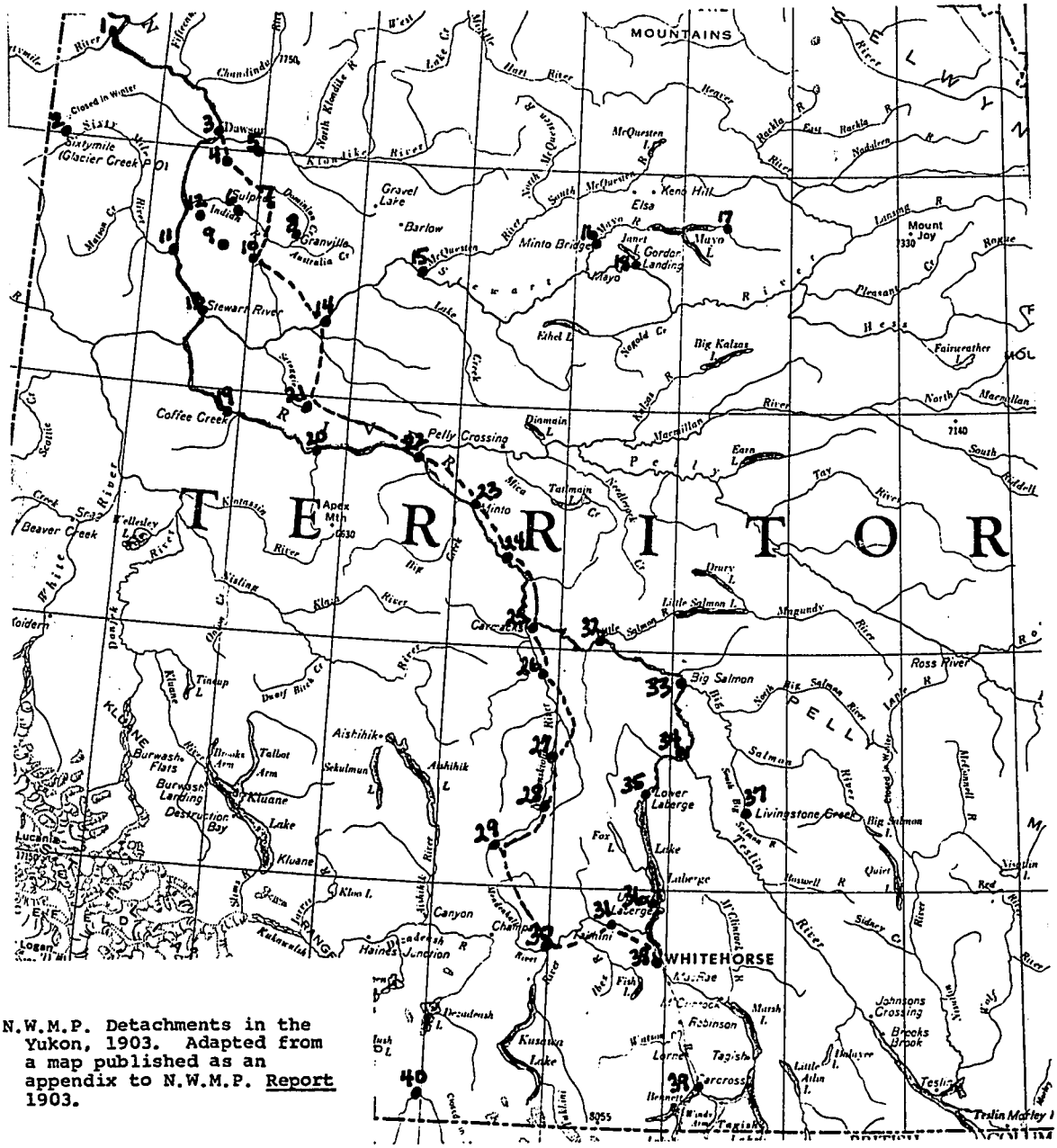
1 Dawson Lbks., v. 4.

Map I

The dotted line shows the winter sled route from Dawson to Whitehorse.

1--Forty Mile
2--Glacier
3--Dawson
4--Grand Forks
5--Hunker
6--Indian River
7--Sulphur Creek
8--Dominion Creek
9--Gold Run
10-Wounded Moose
11-Ogilvie
12-Eureka
13-Stewart
14-Stewart Crossing
15-McQuesten



N.W.M.P. Detachments in the Yukon, 1903. Adapted from a map published as an appendix to N.W.M.P. Report 1903.

16-Mayo Bridge
17-Duncan Creek
18-Gordon Landing
19-Halfway
20-Selwyn
21-Clark
22-Fort Selkirk
23-Minto
24-McKay Crossing
25-Carmacks
26-Montague
27-Hutshi
28-Nordenskiold
29-Little River
30-Mendenhall Landing
31-Takhini
32-Little Salmon
33-Big Salmon
34-Hootalinkwa
35-Lower Laberge
36-Upper Laberge
37-Livingston Creek
38-Whitehorse
39-Caribou
40-Dalton Post

CHAPTER IV

THE POLICE AS CIVIL SERVANTS

A discussion of the services performed by the Mounted Police in the Yukon in regard to civil service activities will to a considerable degree make one of the points outlined in the thesis of this work. If the assertion be accepted that civil service functions constitute a strong force in bringing a territory under government control, then the activities of the police in filling these functions must be reckoned as a most important factor in the history of the Yukon during the gold rush period.

It would be fair to say that the civil duties of the police in the Yukon, as opposed to the strictly regulatory, were the most durable of their contributions, and thus likely the most important. It seems a pity then that these were the duties the police liked the least. Most of the members of the force had come to the Yukon expecting to expend their energies catching criminals. Unfortunately for the police, all their work in the Yukon did not consist of tracking down murderers and prosecuting quack doctors. There was also a multitude of civil service tasks, jobs for various departments which were given to the police because they were best able to do them, or because nobody else would do them at the wages offered, or because the duties were not frequent or heavy enough to necessitate

the presence of regular civil servants.

At one time or another, the police performed nearly all the civil service duties in the Yukon, for all three levels of government--federal, territorial, and municipal. The list is impressive: for the Department of Justice they kept the penitentiary prisoners and the lunatics, and frequently acted as magistrates and justices of the peace. They looked after the welfare of the Indians and ran the Yukon postal service. They acted as land agents and mining recorders for the Department of the Interior. They acted as coroners, and as returning officers at elections. They helped the health officer of the territorial government and isolated diseases among animals for the federal Department of Agriculture. They served writs and notices for all levels of government and accompanied the tax collector on his rounds, or collected taxes themselves. They acted as escorts for visiting dignitaries and provided orderlies for the courts. They assigned two men every night to guard the Dawson banks. They acted as a missing person's bureau for the Yukon and looked after the tangled supply situation left by the Yukon Field Force when it left the country. They enforced the customs and the gold-smuggling laws.

Not all these duties were performed gladly; in fact, the complaints from the police were loud, vehement, and continuous, their main theme being that it was unfair to expect the police to prevent crime and be versatile civil servants at the same time, especially when they were as a

rule not paid extra for these extra duties. Assistant Commissioner Z.T. Wood expressed the prevailing opinion when he wrote in 1902:

> It matters not whether we are shorthanded, or whether our whole available strength is required for our legitimate work . . . seemingly we are at the disposal of any department which wants to save expenses by calling upon the police to do work which properly belongs to its employees. [1]

This complaint is certainly understandable, though it may be less certainly justified. It hinges, of course, on what is considered to be the "legitimate work" of the police. The police thought their proper job was to hunt down criminals and prevent the commission of crimes, but it might be argued that the Yukon was a special case, and that the legitimate work of the police in the Territory was to do whatever the public interest required. Flexibility was one of the N.W.M.P.'s greatest assets, and a quality in which it took great pride; it may be doubted then whether the force was justified in complaining when the government sought to take advantage of this flexibility. Furthermore, some of these objectionable duties--guarding the banks, collecting gold royalties, and so forth--served to prevent crime, and thus might well be considered as falling within the province of the police, though they might not have thought so.

The variety of the civil service duties performed by

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1 N.W.M.P. Report 1902, III, p. 5.

the N.W.M.P. in the Yukon is startling, yet these duties did not devolve upon the police all at once; in some cases they became oppressive only by degrees. Nor did all the duties last for the same length of time. In general, at the very first, in 1895, the police had only the duty of establishing their presence. Then the pressure of the rush increased their civil service duties tremendously in a short period of time. Finally there was a tapering-off period, in which the growth of a civil bureaucracy took much of this load away from the police, whose civil duties diminished in proportion to the growth of various government agencies in the Territory.[1] Still later, when the region declined further, the reduction in civil service personnel threw many jobs back on the police.

The history of the Yukon mail service is an example of how the police became involved in civil duties; typical, because it follows the pattern outlined above, but in a way atypical because the police had originally volunteered for it. Mail to and from the Yukon had originally been handled by the trading companies or by willing travellers on an informal basis. It was sent out only in the summer, when the Yukon River was navigable. When the police first arrived in 1895 they took over the mail service, operating it in much the same casual way. Since no apparent urgency of

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1 For an account of the growth of the Yukon bureaucracy, see David R. Morrison, The Politics of the Yukon Territory, 1898-1909, (Toronto, 1968), chapters II and III.

communication existed, it was thought acceptable to have a situation in which no word was received in Ottawa concerning the Yukon detachment from October of one year to August of the next.[1] However, with the rush of 1897-98, demands were put on the mail service that, although foreseen, had not been adequately provided for. The matter was serious; at one point even the United States Post Office Department inquired whether it could be of assistance.[2] The Canadian government hesitated to spend the enormous sums of money which would be involved in sending out mails by regular means, for Constantine had estimated the cost of a mail, employing half-breeds from Saskatchewan as carriers, at $1,450 each way.[3]

At this point White suggested that the police make themselves responsible for an "occasional mail," if the Post Office Department would share the expenses.[4] It was to be understood that this was only a temporary expedient, and that as soon as the government developed a scheme of its own, the police would be freed of this extra responsibility. Unfortunately, the government plan, which was to let a contract for the mail to the same man who carried it

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1 Department of the Interior to White, 28 July 1896, Compt. Corr., v. 119.
2 Letter of 13 March 1897, Compt. Corr., v. 133.
3 Constantine to White, 22 June 1896, Ibid.
4 White to Herchmer, 30 April 1897, Ibid.

for the United States government between Juneau and Circle City via the Yukon River, fell through when he defaulted on his contract.[1] The police had to shoulder the burden again. Only the winter mail was involved, for the summer mail moved easily by steamer, but still the task was very onerous.

Considerable resentment concerning the mail service was felt by those in command of the police on two grounds--the expense and the waste of manpower. White calculated that the mail service for the winter of 1898-99 between Bennett and Dawson alone had cost the police over $47,000.[2] This, it was felt, was money which should properly have come from the Post Office Department. And again the complaint was raised that the mail duties kept the police from their proper work. Yet in this case there were fewer complaints than usual. Perhaps the element of heroism involved made this job fairly acceptable.[3] It would be dangerously easy to suggest that the police were keen above

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1 W.D. LeSueur of the Canadian Post Office Department to White, 11 June 1898, and Wood to Perry, 12 October 1898, Compt. Corr., v. 147.

2 White's memo of 22 November 1899, Compt. Corr, v. 158.

3 The extant way bills for the mail service provide ample evidence of this heroism. In one trip, Bennett to Dawson, 27 December 1898 to 23 January 1899, under "remarks" is found the following: ". . . delayed between Bennett and Caribou owing to drifting ice and heavy wind. One dog died on route . . . Mail delayed one day at Thirty Mile owing to horses being unable to go further. Between Five Fingers and Hootchikoo one sleigh with five bags of mail . . . went through the ice. Constable Davis and Special Constable Garson got into the river up to the waist to get the sleigh out . . . delayed one day . . . drying mail." Ibid.

all to prove their derring-do in the Yukon. But it is hard to escape the conclusion that there was an element of this feeling in the police attitude towards civil service duties. Those associated with the mail which did not involve a sort of outdoor adventure were far less popular with the men than those which did. It was only natural that a police constable should complain when he came north expecting to brave the terrors of the wilds, and found himself working instead as a mail clerk in the Dawson post office. The men at the smaller detachments complained because they had to act as the local postmasters. The extra salary for this duty at Tagish was twenty dollars a year, later a hundred; at some other posts it was three cents per day.[1] For this absurd sum the policeman, in addition to his regular duties, had to meet all the incoming steamers and mail teams, and was responsible for all the mail that passed through his hands. The press of duties sometimes led to misfortunes; a staff-sergeant was compelled to make restitution of fifty dollars when a registered letter was stolen from the mail at his post of Forty Mile while he was out on patrol.[2] Such incidents were not the fault of the police, although there were instances of negligence on their part.[3]

Of course, there was another side to this matter. The

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1 N.W.M.P. Report 1899, II, A, p. 28.
2 Dawson Lbks., v. 4.
3 N.W.M.P. Report 1902, III, p. 22.

duty of meeting steamers, though onerous, since they came at all hours of the day and night, provided a means of checking dubious characters entering or leaving the country. This was a vital weapon in crime prevention, and was thus well within the province of the police. The same was true to some extent of mail delivery patrols, though they generally moved fast, leaving little time for checking criminals.

These attitudes were quite marked in the case of the civil service duty the police disliked most--that connected with the customs service. The customs duties in the Yukon had been performed by the Mounted Police from their first arrival in the country. Undoubtedly the ingenuity and the stamina of the police were used to the utmost in the posts established at the White and Chilkoot Passes in the winter of 1897-98.[1] But unfortunately, most customs work involved dull clerical routine, a task for which the police were not at all well suited, and which entailed the enforcement of laws that were highly unpopular with the majority of the population. An ex-M.P. from Alberta, D.W. Davis, was appointed Collector of Customs for the Yukon District in the spring of 1896, but the police had to do most of the actual work. That Davis had several sub-collectors of his own at various posts only made the work more distasteful to the police, for it galled them to be compelled to take orders

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1 This is well brought out in S.B. Steele, op. cit., pp. 297-298.

2 Letter of introduction from White to Constantine, 15 May 1896, Compt. Corr., v. 122.

from minor civil servants.

Yet, as with the postal service, the customs work crept upon the police by degrees, so that by the time it became onerous, it was difficult for them to escape it. In many cases, the police had pointed out to the government the need for establishing customs posts,[1] only to find themselves the prisoners of their own suggestions. Happily for the police, their major work in this connection did not last long. The customs revenues from the Yukon were so great--in 1898-99 revenues exceeded expenditures by $450,000--[2] that it paid the government to set up a regular collection apparatus. By the summer of 1898, civil servants had arrived in the Yukon to take over most of the customs operations, and the police abandoned these duties with relief.[3]

The chief difficulty with the customs work was that it involved the police in situations for which they were not trained, and for which, in many cases, they were temperamentally unsuited. Recruits seem to have been given no training in clerical duties; they found typewriters confusing and writing reports an onerous burden. In southern Canada such duties were performed by male civilian clerks, and the police recruit learned nothing of such things. The

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1 For example, Inspector McIlree's letter to White, 27 May 1897, recommending a customs post at Lake Bennett. Compt. Corr., v. 137.

2 The financial side of the matter is discussed below.

3 Compt. Corr., v. 145.

average member of the N.W.M.P. stationed in the Yukon seems to have been more than ordinarily resistant to, or inept at, what might be called "office work."

The difficulties and complaints arising out of this work shed an interesting light on the self-image of the police. That officers in some cases worked twenty hours a day on the passes[1] did not bother them; it was the friction and the petty annoyances of civil service routine which they found so exasperating. At Lake Bennett, the officer in charge complained that the two minor customs officials sent to advise the police were incompetent and spent most of their time trying to ruin the police reputation with "false, vile, officious" letters to their superiors.[2] Another customs officer complained when the police forgot to light his fire one morning.[3] Moreover, the customs duties caused unpleasant clashes with the public as well. There were several incidents in which the police were accused of being greedy or corrupt when they were only enforcing the customs regulations as they had been instructed. A prominent citizen, a Lieut-Col. Barwis, wrote Prime Minister Laurier, complaining furiously of police exactions at the Log Cabin post, and closed by saying that the police had become a "by-

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1 Steele to White, 27 April 1898, Compt. Corr., v. 145.
2 Steele to White, 30 June 1898 and 2 July 1898, ibid.
3 Wood to White, 6 March 1899, Compt. Corr., v. 163.

word for extortion" in the north. The detailed investigation which invariably followed such charges showed that the police had been charging exactly the going customs rate, which was admittedly high, for the Colonel's cigars (the article in question). Wood remarked gloomily that "it is always the unfortunate policeman who, on account of his uniform and having the unpleasant duty of examining people's baggage comes in for the blame. . . . these complaints . . . will continue . . ."[1] The police were highly sensitive to attacks on their public image, and rightly so, since their authority rested to a considerable extent on their reputation. They therefore chafed at duties which cast them in the role of rapacious tax-gatherers.

The police were very much offended by civil servants who came north and expected the constables to act as their batmen. Some minor functionaries did not view the police as the police viewed themselves, and quarrels were frequent. In January 1899 Steele informed the men of his command that they were "not expected to act as servants or in a menial capacity to government officials or other people travelling through the country. They are merely expected to do as much as they would for a neighbour or a friend."[2] That strikes the authentic note; the police were not unwilling to work, but their special status must be recognized--they must be accepted at least as equals. In the same spirit Superinten-

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1 Barwis to Laurier, 7 November 1899; Wood to White, 27 December 1899, Compt. Corr., v. 180.

2 Yukon Ord., v. 12.

dent Primrose declined the position of commissioner of the census in 1901 on the grounds that it would be harmful to the prestige of the police if one of their officers were to serve under a civil servant.[1]

It is evident that the N.W.M.P. had a certain image of themselves in the Yukon, and that those with enough enterprise to meet the challenges of northern service came north with a certain idea of what would be expected of them. Some had a rude awakening when they discovered they were expected to do jobs which were so poorly paid or so unattractive that no one else could be found to do them. By such means government expenses were kept low and the Yukon was left free, for a time, of an unwieldy bureaucracy; this at the expense of police morale, and perhaps, of police effectiveness.

Given this, did the police, and the Yukon as a whole, "pay their way," as far as the federal government was concerned? Certainly the Yukon showed a profit originally, but after the rush this profit turned to loss. The Auditor-General's reports for the years in question[2] show a small but significant excess of revenue over expenditure in the Yukon at first, up to and including the fiscal year June 30th 1900 to June 30th 1901, when the profit was $322,897. The big money-maker was the Department of the Interior, which

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1 Dawson Lbks., v. 4.

2 These figures and the table which follows, are taken from the Report of the Auditor-General for the appropriate year. These were published annually as Sessional Paper no. 1.

collected the royalties on gold, and other fees; in 1897-98 it brought in $735,485, and in the next year over $1.2 million, of which a million was "profit" for the department. After 1901, however, the Yukon ceased to show a profit. Revenues fell somewhat, but expenditures increased greatly, as the following table shows:

Year	Revenues--all sources	Expenditures--all sources	Balance
1898-99	$1,754,974	1,682,842	72,132
1899-00	1,794,671	1,889,265	-94,594
1900-01	1,993,982	1,671,085	322,897
1901-02	1,493,463	2,567,516	-1,074,053
1902-03	1,339,360	2,314,433	-975,073

The largest item of expenditure in 1901-02 was $1,777,382 by the Department of Public Works; most of this was for capital expenditure--buildings, roads and trails, and telegraph lines.

Whether the police paid their way is less easy to determine. The expenditures of the N.W.M.P., including salaries, in connection with their service in the Yukon, were given as follows:[1]

Year	Expenditure
1894-95	nil
1895-96	$ 27,595
1896-97	22,134
1897-98	495,777
1898-99	890,018
1899-00	492,427
1900-01	498,824
1901-02	499,068
1902-03	590,702
1903-04	500,000 (estimated)

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1 Police estimates for 1904-05, Compt. Corr., v. 268. The figures agree with those published in the Auditor-General's reports.

Except for fines, the police generated no revenue themselves, but they did collect the greater part of the money going to the Department of the Interior and the Customs Department, especially during the rush. These sums always greatly exceeded the actual cost of maintaining the police, and thus, in this rather crude sense, the police may be said to have "paid their way." Furthermore, much of the police expenditure shown in the table could properly be charged to other departments. In 1898-99, for instance, while police expenditure in the Yukon soared to $890,000, that of the Post Office Department was only $22,000. A scrutiny of the detailed statement of police expenditures in the Auditor-General's report shows many items of expense incurred in carrying the mails which might well have been charged to the proper department. The question is complicated by the fact that the statistics are somewhat ambiguous.

The accounts of police expenditures which appear in the Auditor-General's report are very detailed; the one for 1897-98 covers twenty-two pages of small type. In that year, just under half a million dollars was spent in connection with the Yukon service, under the following headings:

Pay of force	$50,673
Subsistence	66,034
Forage and dog feed	13,915
Fuel and light	2,226
Clothing	13,884
Repairs and renewals	25,361
Arms and ammunition	1,399
Horses and dogs	8,804
Hospital comforts	2,684
Books and stationery	372

Scouts and guides	54	
Billeting and travelling expenses	10,159	
Transport and freight charges	235,265	
Contingencies	4,904	
New buildings	7,017	
Expenses incurred in N.W.T., chargeable to Yukon	53,020	
Total	495,777	1

The largest expenditure was for transport, and here can be seen expenses for other departments, especially the Post Office. These may be illustrated by two random examples:

> Colorado Packing Co., Lake Bennett: freighting mail and supplies to Lake Bennett. 576 lbs. @ 20¢ . . $115.20
>
> deRond, A., Lake Bennett, packing mail matter, Bennett to Skagway. 20 lbs. @ 50¢ 10.00

In the next fiscal year, 1898-99, police expenditures in the Yukon increased to $890,000. Unfortunately, the Auditor-General's report for that year put almost everything under "General Accounts," so it is not easy to determine exactly where the great increase occurred. The pay of the force tripled, to $150,000, which accounts for $100,000 of the increase. The large expenditures were always for supplies and transportation, and they seem to have increased proportionately.

But the real question should be not so much whether the police "paid their way" as whether their services to the Yukon and to Canada were worth the money spent on them.

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1 Report of the Auditor-General for 1898, Canada, Sessional Paper no. 1, 1899, II, p. 2 and pp. 35-57.

Undoubtedly they were; in financial terms they were a great bargain to the federal and territorial governments.

The various challenges in the civil and criminal spheres in the Yukon gave the police an influence over the Territory which was perhaps uniquely strong for a Canadian governmental agency in peacetime. It would not be too much to say that the Yukon, during the gold rush, was in some respects a police state, if the phrase can be used without prejudice. This may be seen from the aspects of Yukon society over which the police exercised close surveillance or complete control. The police enforced the laws, and sometimes made them. They kept a close watch over all the means of communication in the Territory, both in their capacity as police and as customs officers. The mails were, especially during the rush, almost entirely in their hands, for they not only carried it but also acted as local postmasters. When the telegraph line was built, the operators at the smaller posts were sometimes policemen. No one left or entered the country without passing through the police net. Everyone who left the Yukon was searched, person and baggage, for gold on which the royalty had not been paid; those coming in were searched for liquor, firearms, or gambling equipment. The police exercised a degree of control over the Territory's gold industry, from staking to shipping, especially during the rush. Although they did not altogether set the standards of public morality for the Yukon, they rigorously enforced the compromise which had

been reached between the reform element and the advocates of an open society.[1] All this power was wielded benevolently, or so the police believed, but it is rare in modern times that a police force in an Anglo-Saxon country has had such pervasive authority, and even rarer in a North American setting. Whether it was wise for the government to entrust so many tasks, with the concomitant power, to a police force, on the mere grounds of economy and efficiency, is a moot point. It is a dangerous experiment, which depends for its success largely on the quality of the men entrusted with the authority; in this instance, the government was very fortunate in its choice.

By 1899, a sizeable civil bureaucracy, federal and territorial, was beginning to arise in the Yukon, and the role of the police in guiding the policies and larger issues of Yukon life was declining. During the crucial period of the rush, however, when police exercising their various functions comprised most of the bureaucracy, their role was much more important. Their work, indeed, was a crucial factor in the history of the Yukon, and especially during the rush much of this importance lay in their civil duties.

As agents for the Department of Indian Affairs, the police had much to do with a most unfortunate class of people--the original inhabitants of the Yukon. The Yukon Indians do not seem ever to have had a very sophisticated

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1 D.R. Morrison, op. cit., chapter IX, describes the later triumph of the anti-vice element in the Yukon.

or cohesive social structure. They were nomadic, moving about in small groups, and even when left alone were never very far from starvation. Not much was known of them prior to the gold rush, for the only people who took much interest in them were the transient scientists and the missionaries, in particular Bishop Bompas. The bishop, whose concern for the Indians ran deep, had, of course, a special axe to grind. He feared for the moral and physical health of his flock, and several years before the rush began, already considered that they had been largely debauched by their contacts with whites. It is easy enough to assess the condition of the Yukon Indians in 1898, for the police reported on them annually, mainly to the effect that they were destitute. What is difficult to determine is whether they were ever much better off before the arrival of the white man. In the absence of evidence the question must be left open, though the fact that their numbers may have decreased roughly by half during the 1890's lends weight to Bompas' case.

One might have thought that the police, who prided themselves on their reputation as the great friend of the Plains Indians, would have been sympathetic to the plight of the Indians of the Yukon. Such was not the case, however; in their relations with these unfortunate people the police were not at their most enlightened. Their experience with the Plains Indians seems to have given them an image of the ideal Indian which was more or less that of the "noble

redskin"--that the best of them were proud, energetic men, worthy of some respect; by this standard the Indians of the Yukon were judged.

From the very first it seemed evident to the police that the Yukon Indians did not fit this pattern. Constantine's opinion of them as "a lazy shiftless lot"[1] was echoed and re-echoed by his colleagues and by his successors. Although there were not many Indians in the Yukon, perhaps two thousand in 1898, and although they were thoroughly cowed and peaceful, the police found them a constant source of annoyance because of their unending appeals for food. In their simplicity, they no doubt assumed that the police were in the country to be of service to them, as the missionaries were. The police tended to meet their importunities pragmatically; if the Indians were healthy, they could either work or starve, and in any case it would be simpler if they were put on a reserve, preferably far away.[2]

The question of the Indians also brought the police into conflict with the missionaries of the Territory, especially with the venerable Bishop Bompas, who had been the natives' protector long before the arrival of the police. Constantine had a sharp quarrel with the bishop in the winter of 1896-97 over some Indians who were squatting on land which the police had reserved as the possible site of a detachment. Constantine suspected that Bompas was en-

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1 N.W.M.P. Report 1894, C, p. 70.
2 Steele to Walsh, 26 August 1898, Compt. Corr., v. 155.

couraging them to defy the police, and wrote to Herchmer "I don't propose to be bluffed by an arrogant Bishop who thinks the only people worth considering are a few dirty Indians too lazy to work, and who prefer starvation . . ."[1]

Of course the Indians were dirty and lazy, by European standards, but they were also in the process of being decimated by the white man's diseases--measles and tuberculosis in particular--and by his liquor. The police never seem to have considered it their responsibility to help the Indians face these onslaughts, or to have regarded them as anything more than a nuisance, once it had become clear that they were not a threat. Even the rigorous enforcement of the prohibition of the sale of liquor to the Indians was more than anything to ensure that they continued to be no threat. If the Indians could not compete and survive on the white man's terms, then there was something wrong with them, and they were deserving of contempt. The police were not, and never pretended to be, humanitarians, and acting as Indian agents was only a very minor part of their civil duties. They reluctantly gave food and blankets to the most miserable Indians, but did no more. Perhaps they saved the Indians from a worse fate at the hands of whites, but their treatment of the Indian question is not a very glorious side of their service in the Yukon.

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1 Constantine to Herchmer, 6 December 1896, Compt. Corr., v. 140.

CHAPTER V

THE POLICE AND YUKON POLITICS: CONCLUSION

Since the police were from the beginning the backbone of the government of the Yukon, it must be made clear how that government operated, and what the relationship was between it and the police.

The Yukon was made a Territory on June 13th 1898, partly in response to local demand, and partly to make it quite clear that the area was to be in no way governed from Regina.[1] The new Yukon Territory was to have a measure of local government, in the form of a council, which was appointed by the Commissioner of the Yukon. Steele, as commander of the police in the Territory, was a member of the first council, which was made up entirely of governmental administrators. The other members were the gold commissioner, the local judge, the registrar, and a legal advisor. Meetings were at first held *in camera*, but this practice proving highly unpopular with the citizenry, they were declared open to the public in August 1899.[2]

The Territorial Council concerned itself chiefly with local conditions. It was the body which passed bylaws for

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1 As was mentioned earlier, the Council of the North-West Territories had been eager to exercise their authority in the Yukon, especially in the matter of granting liquor licences, which brought in considerable revenue.

2 J.N.E. Brown, "The Evolution of Law and Government in the Yukon Territory," in S.M. Wickett, ed., *Municipal Government in Canada*, (Toronto, 1907), p. 200 *et. seq.*

Dawson, and regulations for the Yukon in general, and in this respect worked in close cooperation with the police. When the police officials discovered an abuse that was not covered by any existing bylaw, they had no hesitation in writing the Commissioner of the Yukon to suggest that a suitable one be drawn up.[1] Similarly, when the Commissioner received complaints from the citizens that the laws were being broken, he worked in cooperation with the police to secure evidence against the offenders.[2] Many examples can be cited to show the spirit of ready cooperation which existed between the police and the Commissioner of the Yukon. Since the Commissioner was ex officio in command of the police in the Territory his jurisdiction was clear. If a Commissioner was not easy to get along with, friction would arise. Some of the incidents involving the police being forced to act in menial capacities for civil servants, for instance, seem to have originated with J. M. Walsh.[3] On the other hand, the police got along very well with both Commissioners William Ogilvie (1898-1901) and J.H. Ross (1901-1905); this cooperation is reflected in the ease with which

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1 Wood to J.H. Ross, 15 April 1901, requesting a bylaw to prevent the riding of bicycles on sidewalks. Dawson Lbks., v. 4.

2 Wood to officer commanding "B" Division, 16 November 1901, regarding prostitutes disguising their premises as cigar stores. Ibid.

3 Herchmer to White, 26 January 1898, Compt. Corr., v. 152.

legislation was put through, and the absence of complaints on both sides.

The duties of the N.W.M.P. in the Yukon also involved them, not for the first time in their history, in the wider sphere of Canadian-American relations. The Yukon was for several years a rather sensitive point in the relations between the two countries, and might well be taken as an example in microcosm of Canadian-American relations of this period.

The police on the whole exhibited all the British-Canadian attitudes towards the United States prevalent in contemporary Victorian Canada. When Constantine spoke of the "sweepings of the slums" he did no more than echo the opinions of many of his colleagues and his countrymen--those, at any rate, who did not worship the United States and its values, as many admittedly did. Just as Canadians had been apprehensive about the possibility of Fenian raids in the 1860's and 1870's, so the authorities in the Yukon were always nervously aware of the close proximity of the "Spread-Eagleism in and about Skagway,"[1] as White put it. At the beginning of the development of the Yukon gold fields, when the activity was centred around Forty Mile, it was unclear exactly where the boundary ran, a fact which tended to make American sympathizers among the miners bolder than they other-

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1 White to F.C. Wade, n.d. F.C. Wade Papers, Public Archives of Canada, MG 30, E-13, v. 1.

wise might have been. And there was complete confusion as to where the boundary ran in the vicinity of the White and Chilkoot Passes. Some exponents of the extreme American point of view had it crossing Lake Bennett, and in the winter of 1897-98, with thousands of men coming over the passes, the question became much more than academic.

The problem of the boundary, as most boundary problems do, lay in the desire of both parties to advance their claims as much as possible. Yet the solution arrived at was typical of the new age of common-sense solutions to such questions. While the governments sparred with each other, the police were faced with the problem of selecting a location for their customs post. A post on Lake Bennett, in accordance with the extreme American claim, would have been unsuitable from a police point of view because of the difficulty of exercising control at such a point. In these circumstances, and lacking any definite instructions from the Department of the Interior, the police reached a tacit understanding with the U.S. marshal in Skagway that a temporary boundary should be established at the foot of Lake Lindeman.[1] However, in January 1898, the police were instructed by Ottawa to establish a post on the summit of White Pass, locating it on a spot where the water ran into the Yukon River, rather than into the Pacific.[2] These in-

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1 Perry to White, 8 January 1898, Compt. Corr., v. 145.

2 White to Perry, 15 January 1898, ibid. A rather different interpretation is given by H.G. Classen in Thrust and Counterthrust, (Chicago, 1965), in which he has the initiative coming from Steele. The letters exist, however, to show that it came from Ottawa.

structions made Perry apprehensive, for, as he wrote White, many Americans in Skagway and Juneau would be furious at this further advance of Canadian claims.[1] In fact, it was not an advance of Canadian claims but a sensible compromise. The Americans would put the boundary at Lake Bennett, and Canadian extremists would have it sixty miles seaward from Skagway. H.G. Classen[2] describes the skirmishing, most of it having to do with the transit of goods across United States territory, which preceded this compromise.

Later, anti-Canadian feeling manifested itself in the autumn of 1901 in an abortive plot to take over the Yukon by force.[3] But this venture was not even up to the level of comic-opera, and it soon "ended in smoke."[4] Petty as the incident was, however, it served to confirm the worst suspicions of the police. A good deal of the friction between Canadians and Americans in the Yukon, however, was on the level of common buffoonery. A rumour in the Alaska press that a crowd of excited miners had hauled down the Union Jack at the summit of one of the passes turned out on investigation to be a case of a drunken railway navvy using the flag as a blanket.[5] Many of the alarms in the Territory

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1 Perry to White, 15 January 1898, Compt. Corr., v. 145.
2 Op. cit.
3 Wood to White, 15 October 1901, Dawson Lbks., v. 4.
4 Wood to White, 25 January 1902, ibid.
5 Wood to Perry, 4 February 1899, Compt. Corr., v. 162.

were of the same sort.

The only issue which caused much reverberation on the national level was the fact that for a time the police kept a constable in uniform in Skagway as an agent to facilitate the forwarding of police supplies to the Yukon. Great objection was raised in Skagway to the presence of a uniformed official of a foreign power, and to the notices giving requirements for entry to the Yukon which Steele had caused to be posted in the town. In answer to a note from the American Secretary of State, John Hay, the Canadian government attempted to ease ruffled feelings by having the constable appear only in civilian clothes, but the Americans were not satisfied, and the representative of the police had to be withdrawn altogether, leaving police affairs in the hands of a civilian agent. The Canadian government did not feel that the convenience of a police agent was worth the dispute involved.[1]

On other levels, though, there was cooperation. In addition to the mail service, there were the efforts of the Canadian government to facilitate the progress of the Yukon Relief Expedition. A so-called United States Relief Expedition to the Yukon resulted from rumours in the American press in 1897 that United States citizens were starving in Dawson and vicinity. Pressure was put on the government in

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1 The relevant letters, from Wood's first report to White of 15 August 1899, to White's final instructions to Wood of 25 November 1899, are in Compt. Corr., v. 179.

Washington, and an announcement was made in December 1897 that a large quantity of stores would be forwarded to Dawson by way of Dyea. The Canadian government was willing to do what it could to help these stores along, but the expedition was abandoned at Dyea in March 1898. An offshoot of this expedition was the sending of 550 reindeer into the interior over Dalton's Trail, which was also a failure. The Mounted Police willingly cooperated with the United States Army by making arrangements for the expedition's progress into Canada.[1]

Partly because of the presence of Americans, the system of government introduced into the Yukon in 1898 was not immediately democratic. The federal government did not intend it to be so. Neither the authorities in Ottawa nor those in the Yukon had any intention of granting self-government to a community which was more than half American. When Steele wrote that many of Dawson's citizens "could well be spared in any community"[2] he only expressed the official position. It was not without considerable justification that Yukon officialdom looked askance at the Americans who came to the Territory after 1897. It had been easy enough to deflate the original miners' feeble attempt at assertion of their authority, but the Klondikers were a wilder breed of men--men who did not "appreciate

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1 N.W.M.P. Report 1898, III, p. 48; Compt. Corr., v. 146.
2 N.W.M.P. Report 1897, LL, p. 307.

being cramped, confined, regulated, or ruled by Canadian functionaries."[1] Although there was never any serious possibility of a military takeover of the Yukon by the United States, the police and the government were constantly made uneasy by the American character of Dawson. The thought was never far from their minds that what "Spread-Eagleism" could not accomplish from without, a spirit of unchecked libertarianism might do from within. Although the authorities had enough sense not to interfere with harmless manifestations of republican sentiment such as the annual Fourth of July celebrations, they had no intention whatever of letting the celebrants have a voice in the government prematurely.

Eventually the public pressure for a more representative form of government became too insistent to deny, and the Yukon Council was increased in size to ten members, of whom five were to be elected. This shift to a more democratic form of local government took place only in 1902, after the most volatile elements of the community had disappeared in search of new gold fields, or had gone home, wealthy or otherwise. The reluctance to grant wider powers to the community in its early stages of growth was quite in line with the generally paternalistic outlook of the police and the government authorities in the Yukon.

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1 Morris Zaslow, "The Yukon: Northern Development in a Canadian-American Context," in Mason Wade, ed., Regionalism in the Canadian Community, 1867-1967, (Toronto, 1969), p. 188.

It is not difficult to pass judgement on the efficiency of the police in the Yukon. What they set their minds to do they did extremely well, and even what they did half-heartedly was done satisfactorily. Perhaps a good proof of this statement is the relative absence of complaints about the police on the part of the public, a phenomenon which is well reflected in the Dawson newspapers and in the correspondence of the foremost political chiefs of the time, Sifton and Laurier. There are, in the Public Archives of Canada, three files extant of newspapers published in Dawson in 1899--the Yukon Midnight Sun, which supported the government, and its two competitors, the Klondike Nugget and the Dawson Daily News, which did not--the Midnight Sun dubbing them the "Yellow Rag" and the "Boer Organ" respectively. The three newspapers disagreed with each other constantly and violently, and the two opposition papers lost no opportunity to malign the administration of the Yukon in language which was strong even for the period. Yet never were the police mentioned in anything but words of great respect. The Nugget, the most scurrilous of the three,[1] was in fact kindest to the police; in one issue, under the editorial heading "Poor Yukoners," it stated that "the only good thing that can be said of the government of the Yukon District is that we have an excellent police and court . . . The debit side covers several pages . . ."[2] The same paper

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1 Each issue was four pages long and cost fifty cents.
2 30 August 1898.

frequently carried a column entitled "From the Barracks," containing gossip and personal news about the local police detachment. Contemporary books on the Yukon were equally complimentary.

The police were not drawn into the so-called "Yukon Scandals," except peripherally, insofar as their absurdly low rate of pay was cited by the Dawson papers as another example of the stupidity of the government. Most of the public indignation was directed towards the regular civil service, and especially towards the unfortunate Gold Commissioner, Thomas Fawcett, of whom the kindest thing the Nugget could find to say was that he was totally incompetent.[1] The Nugget was instrumental in raising popular opinion against the public administration, to the end that in August 1898 a group of miners petitioned the federal government to hold an investigation into alleged irregularities in the Gold Commissioner's office, and other abuses. Such an inquiry was held in January 1899 under the supervision of William Ogilvie, and largely exonerated the officials of any wrongdoing.

The cudgel was then taken up by Sir Charles Hibbert Tupper, who in two very long speeches to the House of Commons attacked the policy of the Liberal government in the Yukon, and Ogilvie's handling of the inquiry in particular:

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1 16, 20, and 23 July 1898.

> . . . the uncle of the Minister of the Interior by marriage [Ogilvie] was not the proper man to inquire into charges which came so near the nephew's door. I say it was a gross scandal . . . to put a man into such a delicate position, and the fact that Mr. Ogilvie would act under the circumstances indicated his entire unfitness for that position. [1]

The odour of political partisanship hangs heavily over the whole affair. The reputation of the police did not suffer in this matter, for they were involved in it only as witnesses to the supposed crimes of others. At one point in the investigation, one of the complaints which had been lodged against the police in their capacity as customs officers was brought forward as evidence of corruption, but this was old stuff, and carried little weight.

An examination of the police as individuals understandably reveals a wide variation in competence, enthusiasm, and character which, insofar as these human attributes affected the performance of their duties, are relevant to this study. Furthermore, in the Klondike, the police for almost the only time in this study were dealing with large numbers of white people, and hence were being subjected to a wide range of basically urban temptations. In the Arctic and in Hudson Bay the pressures on the police were to be of a different nature.

Given these conditions it should come as no surprise that there were frequent lapses from the strict path of duty.

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1 Canada, House of Commons, Debates, 27 June 1899, p. 5962.

Many traps existed to snare the susceptible. The N.W.M.P. were exceedingly ill-paid; during the Klondike period the basic rate of pay for a constable was fifty cents a day, and after three years' service, seventy-five cents. In addition, men on Yukon service were given fifty cents a day hardship allowance. In contrast, common labourers and tradesmen in Dawson could make between five and ten dollars a day in wages. Thus a basic and important fact of police service was that no one entered it for profit; most of the recruits were out for adventure. But even the call of adventure was not enough to fill the ranks with Canadians; the force had to advertise for recruits in Britain, where young men were unaware of, or oblivious to the purchasing power of a dollar in the Yukon.[1]

At the same time, some men volunteered for Yukon service for a free ride north, in hope of being able to get out of the force and stake a claim.[2] With a fair number of idealists and opportunists on the force, it was inevitable that disenchantment would set in for many, and the police

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1 R.C. MacLeod, op. cit., p. 152, notes that forty-eight percent of the recruits taken into the N.W.M.P. between 1895 and 1897 had been born in the United Kingdom. There are no figures for those who came directly from Britain to join the force; presumably a great many were already in Canada. This percentage dropped sharply on the outbreak of the Boer War; for 1900-1902 it was only sixteen per cent.

2 It was police policy to permit men to purchase their discharge before completing their term of service. This policy was, however, generally suspended during the gold rush and for several years thereafter; police in the Yukon wishing to buy their way out of the force were often refused permission to do so.

reports for every year note that it was almost impossible to get men to re-enlist in the Yukon. If it had not been for the establishment of canteens at police posts where small luxuries were sold at reasonable prices,[1] the police constable in the Yukon would have found his pay able to buy him practically nothing. And as has already been noted, the police were forbidden to stake claims or to engage in any work for profit in their spare time.

With all this in mind, it may be surprising to find that examples of serious dereliction of duty among the police were quite rare. There were a few cases of theft; one constable while guarding the Bank of British North America stole a small sum from the manager's desk, while another stole $2,300 from the Board of Licence Commissioners.[2] A special constable embezzled $1,100 from the Dawson dog pound.[3] But there was not much of this sort of thing; most of the reductions in rank, fines, and dismissals handed out to the police were for service offences, of which there were a great many. The letter-books of the Dawson detachment are full of the records of police who were punished for visiting brothels, being drunk in dance-halls, and the like. "Breaking barracks" was a daily occurrence.

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1 Yukon Ord., v. 12.
2 General Yukon Order 2048, 30 May 1903, and Yukon Order 225, 22 April 1899. Copies kindly furnished by S.W. Horrall, R.C.M.P. Headquarters, Ottawa.
3 Dawson Lbks., v. 7.

The various misdemeanors committed by the police are important to this study not so much in themselves as in how they impaired police efficiency or affected their relationship with the community. It would be easy to overestimate their seriousness. As Wood admitted, "the young men must have some amusement,"[1] and there seems to have been no public outcry over any alleged police depravity.[2] The few cases of theft were reprehensible, but most of the sins of the police were ones of the flesh, and as such were perhaps more easily excused by the Klondikers than crimes of violence or dishonesty.

Despite the best efforts of the various officers commanding the police, discipline could not be kept as tight as it was to the south, or as it was later to be kept farther north. Behaviour was tolerated which under other circumstances would have brought instant dismissal. A case in point is that of Inspector Frank Harper, who was a veteran of nearly twenty years' service when he was sent to the Yukon in 1898. Pierre Berton quotes an old sourdough as saying "I myself saw Captain Harper of the North West Mounted Police bet a hundred dollars that he could strip off naked, stand on his head on the stage of the Monte Carlo theatre, and eat a pound of raw beefsteak off

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1 N.W.M.P. Report 1902, III, B, p. 79.

2 There was at any rate no outcry from the dancehall girls, who found them good customers, as shown by the fact that gonorrhoea was the third most prevalent malady among the police in Whitehorse in 1901, after colds and gastric disorders. N.W.M.P. Report 1901, III, D, p. 62.

the floor, and he won the bet."[1] This caused no official action. That this rather implausible story is likely true is indicated by the incident which was the cause of Harper being sent out of the Yukon, a very unsavoury situation involving drunkenness and adultery with a dance-hall girl.[2] Presumably public demonstrations of this sort did nothing to improve the image of the police in the Yukon. It is also of some significance that Harper's disgrace was kept very quiet, and no action was taken against him, for the sake of his wife; the treatment handed out to a constable under similar circumstances would undoubtedly have been very different.

Under the conditions the police had to endure, and with their miserable pay, it speaks well for the fibre of the force that derelictions of duty were so few, and that the challenges of the Yukon were met as well as they were. For every record of a sergeant reduced to the ranks for drunkenness, or an officer in disgrace, there are many accounts of the sort of heroism which so caught the attention of the public and the writers of popular fiction. If the police were not perfect, they were undoubtedly closer to perfection than was the average Klondiker, and that is all, perhaps, that can reasonably be expected of the character of a police force.

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1 Berton, op. cit., p. 322.
2 The relevant papers are in Compt. Corr., v. 179.

A great deal of the foregoing has been an attempt to examine and to assess the effect of the Mounted Police on the burgeoning frontier society of the Yukon. Other writers have considered the same subject, of course, but not always with the same emphasis and conclusions that are reached in this present work. S.D. Clark, the Canadian sociologist, analyses both the British Columbia and the Yukon gold rush periods in chapter V of his book The Developing Canadian Community,[1] and puts a somewhat different emphasis on the role of the police in the Yukon. He agrees that the police were "of considerable importance in establishing a stable organization" of the region's society.[2] But he believes that the work of the police, and the other agencies such as the Salvation Army and the various churches, were not the cause of this stability, but only a manifestation of it, or at best a catalyst of it:

> Institutional controls derived from outside, however, were effective only as a result of the development of an underlying social consciousness favourable to the establishment of order within the community. This was true even of the work performed by the Mounted Police. That is to say that processes of social re-organization were generated from within rather than from outside the society. Lacking external aids the establishment of social order would have come about more slowly as the experience of mining communities amply demonstrates, but these aids in themselves provided no solid basis upon which to erect a stable society. Collective efforts were canalized and provided a more permanent goal of achievement; they sprang, however, from the urge of the people themselves to better their conditions.[3]

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1 Op. cit.
2 Ibid., p. 97.
3 Ibid., p. 98.

It is true that the Yukon possessed "an underlying social consciousness favourable to the establishment of order within the community"--Constantine had discovered that fact as early as 1894-95 when he found that many of the miners were "well-disposed" towards him and his mission. But whether this element of stablility in Yukon society could have prevailed over the undisciplined hordes of new arrivals--for whom, as Clark himself points out, "the rush to the mining frontier was something in the nature of a 'grand spree'"[1] --is a moot point. Without the police, the Yukon might have settled down eventually, as other mining communities did, for there were other forces disposed to stability--the merchant community, the churches, the schools, and regular family life. But the other mining towns--in Alaska for example--did not become stable until their days of prosperity were virtually over; speed in this respect was essential in the Yukon for political as much as for social reasons.

By 1899 the rush was over. Although the greenhorns, who for a time kept arriving by steamer, gave the impression that Dawson was still booming, this was no longer true. All the gold-bearing creeks had been staked, and most of them had been worked out, or nearly so. Dawson had ceased to provide unlimited opportunities for prospectors, so in the summer of 1899 when it was announced that gold had been discovered at Atlin and on the beaches of Nome, Alaska, the

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1 Ibid., p. 82.

more volatile elements of Dawson disappeared for good, and the community started on a long and slow period of shrinkage and decline.

With the new century came a new method of mining. Previously, when gold had been thick in the ground, the cost of labour meant nothing; only simple machines were needed, and a man could dig hundreds or thousands of dollars from the earth in a single day. Now, however, what gold there was still in the ground was too scattered to make such methods profitable, and the era of the dredges began. These were huge machines which chewed up the old creeks, and which needed only a trace of gold in every cubic yard of gravel to make their operations profitable. The Yukon had changed, and the operations of the police had to change to meet new circumstances.

In the first place, the reduced population of the Yukon required a much smaller police force to maintain law and order. Yet the number of police was by no means immediately reduced in proportion. There were several reasons for this anomaly. The police were performing services which had no relation to the size of the population; it made no difference to the size of a mail patrol, for example, whether it carried fifty letters or five hundred. And besides, the area over which police operations extended was actually larger in 1903 than it had been in 1898, for not all the miners left the Yukon with the decline of the Klondike area. Some went farther up the rivers and streams

of the Yukon in search of new bonanzas, causing new posts to be established from time to time at places such as Duncan Creek and Gordon Landing, far from the original discoveries. As Assistant Commissioner Z.T. Wood pointed out in his report for 1905, despite the fact that the population was decreasing, "each particular locality added its quota to those departing, the actual number of inhabitants at any point is not materially decreased, and therefore demands the same police protection."[1] For these reasons, as well as inertia in Ottawa, there were still three hundred police in the Territory at the beginning of 1903. But in that year it was decided in Ottawa that conditions in the Yukon did not warrant a force of that size, and it was cut back to 228 by the end of 1905. In ensuing years further cuts were made, until be the end of the first World War the force in the Yukon reached a strength of about forty-five.

This action produced protests from two quarters. The remaining residents of the half-abandoned creeks complained that they were being deserted.[2] Z.T. Wood protested that not all factors in the situation were being taken into consideration. It was true, he said, that three hundred men were not needed to keep the peace in the Yukon (thereby abandoning his argument of the previous year); a hundred

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1 R.N.W.M.P. Report 1905, III, p. 5.
2 In 1905 seven permanent posts were abandoned: Halfway, Selwyn, White Pass Summit, Pleasant Camp, Kynocks, Montague, and Yukon Crossing. Ibid., p. 8.

men could easily police the whole Territory, "provided that they had only the legitimate work of peace officers to perform."[1] Wood had a point, since other federal agencies were also withdrawing their services, thus throwing extra duties on the police, but this, though true, was a familiar refrain, and did not change the move towards retrenchment.

The death of the "boom" was a blessing in one way, insofar as most of the area's criminals left the Territory along with prosperity, though Wood claimed that the remaining criminals filled the vacuum by spreading their operations over a wider area.[2] Be that as it may, by this time the duties of the police had become considerably less complex and arduous than before. The centre of police activity in the north was moving towards the Arctic and towards Hudson Bay, and the Yukon was becoming by degrees once more a somnolent northern backwater.

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1 R.N.W.M.P. Report 1905, III, pp. 9-10.
2 Ibid., p. 3.

CHAPTER VI

NORTH OF THE ARCTIC CIRCLE

The police in the Yukon had set a precedent for further northern service, by showing they could adapt themselves to almost any physical conditions and perform a wide variety of onerous duties. Considering the great success with which they had handled the difficulties of the Yukon, it was almost axiomatic that the police would be called upon if further northern service were required.

And such service was required, not long after the Yukon began to decline in importance, for reasons that echoed those which had brought the force into the Yukon in the first place. In the year 1903, the government took notice of two remote areas under its nominal sovereignty--the delta of the Mackenzie River and the west coast of Hudson Bay. This government interest--it would be wrong to call it renewed interest, for it was appearing for the first time--manifested itself in the sending of police expeditions to those two points.

The government of Canada had held title to part of the Arctic islands since 1870, when it acquired Rupert's Land, and the remainder since 1880, when the rest of the Arctic was transferred by Britain to Canada.[1] Although the lieuten-

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1 V.K. Johnston, "Canada's Title to the Arctic Islands," Canadian Historical Review, XIV, March 1933, pp. 29-30.

ant-governors of Manitoba and the North-West Territories held a tenuous oversight over these vast lands, they were in fact terra incognita as far as Ottawa was concerned. Diamond Jenness states the situation concisely: "Down to the very end of the nineteenth century . . . Canada completely neglected her Arctic. . . . As long as no other country attempted to gain a foothold in that region they [Canadians] were content to forget it and push on with the development of the southern provinces of the Dominion."[1] The reasons why the federal government displayed no interest in these lands during the first twenty years of Canadian ownership of them, why all the famous names in the great nineteenth century age of Arctic exploration are either British, European or American, are easily answered: Canada had better, or at least more pressing, things to do than worry about the far north. As Jenness puts it, "The authorities . . . were carrying more important burdens than the remote and useless Arctic,"[2] a statement perhaps ironically meant, but nonetheless true.

What is of immediate concern here, however, is why the government reversed itself early in the present century and took notice of this erstwhile "remote and useless" land. Since the two areas concerned are so far apart, and since the impetus leading to the establishment of government au-

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1 Diamond Jenness, Eskimo Administration: II, Canada, (Montreal, 1964), pp. 16-17.

2 Ibid., p. 16.

thority was somewhat different in each case, they will be treated separately in this and the next chapter.

Far to the north of any settlement, near the point where the Yukon-Alaska boundary runs into the Beaufort Sea, lay Herschel Island, a barren blob about thirty-five square miles in area. Under ordinary circumstances it would probably never have attracted a moment's notice from the government, the police, or anyone else, but not long before the turn of the century it had acquired a strategic importance far beyond the ordinary as a wintering place for the western Arctic whaling fleet.

Unlike the whaling ships of the eastern Arctic and Hudson Bay, which sometimes came and went each season, the ships in the west almost always came for a voyage of two summers at a time, because of the short open-water seasons and the tremendous distances involved in getting home around the north of Alaska. Beginning in 1889, the captains of these ships became accustomed to winter at Herschel Island, central to the whaling area, where they built warehouses and sometimes land dwellings for the cold season. The whalers, all of whom were Americans, were from the Canadian point of view transgressors on several counts. They were unhampered by customs regulations and were under no restrictions in regards to liquor. The value of the whales taken was also not inconsiderable. In 1907, Inspector A.M. Jarvis, then commanding at Herschel Island, consulted four veteran

whaling captains,[1] who told him that the first whale had been taken in Canadian waters in 1891, by the Grampus. Since then 1,345 whales had been caught, valued at $13,450,000, while trading furs with the natives added another $1,400,000 to the revenue.[2] Although these men had no interest in making territorial claims, their very presence cast doubts on Canadian sovereignty over the island and the surrounding area; most of them doubtless neither knew nor cared that the island was fifty miles east of the international boundary. Furthermore the whalers were suspected, correctly, of corrupting the morals, and what was more important, the whole social structure of the Eskimo inhabitants of the area.

It was the matter of the Eskimos which initially forced the reluctant federal government to pay attention to the area. Some whalers had no hesitation in supplying liquor to the Eskimos and teaching them to make it for themselves out of molasses or potatoes, the purpose being to acquire cheap servants and complaisant women. So potent were the combined effects of liquor, disease, and general social disintegration that the Eskimo population of the Mackenzie Delta area, which had been about 2,000 in 1830, had by 1930 declined to 200, of whom only twelve were true natives of that area, the rest having migrated from Alaska.[3]

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1 G.W. Porter, George B. Leavitt, J.A. Tilton, and J.A. Wing.
2 R.N.W.M.P. Report 1908, K, p. 140.
3 Jenness, op. cit., p. 14.

The catalytic agent in bringing this situation to the attention of the authorities was, as had largely been the case in the Yukon, the missionaries. An Anglican missionary, Rev. I.O. Stringer, reached Herschel Island in 1894, followed by Rev. C.E. Whittaker in 1895.[1] These men forwarded complaints to the government concerning the alleged debauching of the natives. Nor was this the government's only source of information. As early as 1895, rumours had reached Inspector Constantine in the Yukon that there were illegal and undesirable activities afoot at Herschel Island, which was part of the Yukon under the order in council of 1895. In the fall of that year Constantine reported to Commissioner Herchmer that a man who had been an engineer on one of the whaling ships had come to him with ominous news:

> The carryings-on of the officers and crews of the whalers there was such that no would believe . . . that large quantities of whiskey are taken up in the ships . . . as long as the liquor lasts, the natives neither fish nor hunt, and die of starvation in consequence. . . . The captains and mates of these vessels purchase for their own use girls from nine years and upwards . . .[2]

In partial defence of the whalers it may be said that many of the mixed-blood children who resulted from these unions were well looked after, and were sometimes taken south for education. It was the general effect on Eskimo society which was the real crime and disaster.

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1 T.C.B. Boon, The Anglican Church from the Bay to the Rockies, (Toronto, 1962), p. 232.

2 Constantine to Herchmer, 4 September 1895, Compt. Corr., v. 135. The man is not named.

No doubt Constantine was willing to give full credence to the rumours which reached him from the coastal area. Prolonged trouble there would inevitably mean police intervention, and in 1895 the police were glad to make themselves useful wherever they could, since the future of the force was by no means secure. The Conservative administration of Mackenzie Bowell was tottering to its fall, and the resurgent Liberals had traditionally been cool to the police.[1] It was the same situation that had taken Constantine into the Yukon in the first place.

In 1896 Constantine reported that nearly twelve hundred men were wintering at Herschel Island. Desertions by crew members were a frequent problem for the whaling captains. The crew led a very hard life; because of the profit-sharing system used by the whaling companies, their pay at the end of the voyage was sometimes nothing, and they were denied the officers' privilege of living on shore during the winter with an Eskimo woman. When the news of the discovery of gold in the Klondike reached Herschel Island, many men tried to desert and head south to the gold fields. These attempts were met with force, and sometimes led to disorder and bloodshed.[2] The sort of men who made up the whaling crews was vividly described a few years later by the inspector in charge of the Herschel Island detachment. Many of the crew

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1 R.C. MacLeod makes this point in op. cit., chapter V.
2 N.W.M.P. Report 1896, p. 238.

members, he wrote,

> . . . are not sailors at all, and have never been to sea before signing on, some are men who have come to sea to get away from the drinking habit, and a few . . . have done time for some offence in the United States. . . . Altogether they are rather a rough lot, and require to have a firm hand over them. [1]

The Canadian government looked with considerable disfavour on this situation, once it had been made aware of it. It was not very long since Canada had been involved with the United States in the matter of the Bering Sea seal fisheries, and she viewed the presence of American whalers in her waters with misgivings born of years of experience. It became clear to the government that in order to assert effective economic and political control over the western Arctic, some display of sovereignty would have to be made. And as an added dividend, something hopefully might be done for the Eskimos. It would not appear that the plight of the natives was uppermost in the minds of the police and the government. Comptroller White believed conditions were only natural, that what was going on at Herschel Island was no more than was to be expected under the circumstances. "It is" he complained, "so difficult to convince the goody-goody people that in the development and settlement of a new country allowances must be made for the excesses of human

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1 Insp. D.M. Howard, ? August 1906, Compt. Corr., v. 309.

nature."[1]

Not everyone agreed with this "reasonable" view of the situation. Bishop W.C. Bompas, whose diocese of Selkirk included Herschel Island, did not hesitate to give the same attention to that remote spot as he had to the Yukon. In June 1896 he wrote to the Minister of the Interior "to call to your attention some matters which I think may probably call for the interference of your Government." These concerned the relations between the whalers and the natives at Herschel, which were resulting in "deeds of furious violence . . . among the natives . . . to the utter ruin of those races."[2] Faced with this information, the minister asked Fred White whether he thought it would be feasible for the N.W.M.P. to assume the responsibility for policing the region. White was unenthusiastic. He remarked that it might be possible to get a detachment or two into the Fort McPherson area by way of the Hudson's Bay Company supply boats, but the coastal area would best be policed from a patrol boat. However, he added, "The expense would be large, and . . . much greater than the existing state of affairs, or the results, would justify at present."[3] Meanwhile, the minister had replied to Bishop Bompas to the same effect, that the project would be too expensive, and

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1 White to A.E. Forget, Lieutenant-Governor of the North-west Territories, 7 October 1903, Compt. Lbks., p. 90.
2 18 June 1896, Compt. Corr., v. 314.
3 Memo of 19 October 1896, ibid.

that "There would be great difficulty, just at present, in getting the requisite appropriation."[1] This was an honest excuse. Sir Charles Tupper's government had just fallen, and the country was at the end of a prolonged economic depression. There was no money for non-essentials such as Eskimo welfare.

The late 1890's were not auspicious years for Canada to try to exert her authority in the Arctic for whatever reason, humanitarian or strictly political, for she already had all she could do to control the Yukon. The police were heavily committed in the Yukon from 1897 until 1903, and during part of this period also supplied a battalion of men for service in the Boer War. Thus it was not until after 1900 that the government and the police could begin to think seriously about an extension of law and order to the north, and not until 1903 that an expedition could actually be sent out.

By 1900, Comptroller White had begun to make enquiries of his subordinates as to how the authority of the police might best be extended into the Mackenzie Delta area. "It has been urged" he wrote,

> that the time has arrived when the Canadian Government should take steps to protect Canadian traders in that vicinity, and what I am most anxious to get at is (1) the facilities or means of travel between Fort Macpherson and the mouth of the Mackenzie, both summer and winter, and (2) the character and extent of the trading done by the whalers with the natives for furs--trade which properly belongs to Canada, or upon which Canadian customs duties should be paid. [2]

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1 R.W. Scott to Bompas, 2 October 1896, Compt. Corr., v. 314.
2 White to Superintendent A.H. Griesbach, 8 May 1900, ibid.

White was not interested in the actual whaling operations, nearly all of which took place outside the three mile limit, where Canada could claim no control, but coastal trading was another matter. In 1900 an exploratory patrol was sent from Dawson to Fort McPherson and return, via the Yukon and Porcupine Rivers, which route, in fact, traversed a good section of Alaska.[1] White confided to Clifford Sifton that he had "no doubt that in the early future we shall have police scattered between the Yukon and the mouth of the Mackenzie River, either directly across country, or via the Stewart and Peel Rivers." He still had qualms about the wisdom of the whole idea: "It is certainly desirable that Canada should assert her authority in the Arctic Ocean, but it is questionable whether the results would justify the expenditure, at present."[2]

Possibly White was overestimating the difficulties of the proposal, for although Herschel Island was quite unknown to the Canadian government, Fort McPherson, the other suggested base of operations, should have been reasonably well known to the authorities. Fort McPherson was not a new settlement; it was at that time over sixty years old, having been founded by the Hudson's Bay Company in 1840.[3]

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1 Under the Treaty of Washington, 1871, Canada had transit rights to these two rivers.

2 White to Sifton, 23 January 1901, Compt. Corr., v. 314.

3 For the early history of the area see Ethel G. Stewart, "Fort McPherson and the Peel River Area," (unpublished M.A. thesis, Queen's University, 1953).

Fort McPherson is located on the Peel River, about fifteen miles south of its junction with the Mackenzie, and although it is not in the Mackenzie Delta proper, it was then the main community of the area, and the only permanent one which housed white men. The post was not even really inaccessible, for the Hudson's Bay Company had begun to run steamers down the Mackenzie in 1887,[1] and it had been used as a jumping-off point for the Yukon by a small but significant number of miners who entered that country by the Rat-Bell-Porcupine-Yukon River route. In 1894 the Canadian government had asked John Firth, the Hudson's Bay Company man at Fort McPherson, to act as an unofficial government representative; his most important duty was to keep an eye on the whalers, which he did until relieved by the police.[2] This was not an unwelcome duty; Firth, as an employee of the Company, would be concerned with the activities of rival traders. It is uncertain whether he had any real authority, or was expected actually to do anything. It may be assumed that he was not, since he was a long way from Herschel Island, the main trouble spot, and he seems to have had no ameliorating effect on the abuses which were taking place there.

Herschel Island was a different matter as far as accessibility was concerned. It could be reached easily enough in the late summer by ship from the Pacific, unless,

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1 E.G. Stewart, op. cit., p. 266.
2 Ibid., p. 339.

as sometimes happened, ice conditions in the Beaufort Sea prevented ships from getting around Point Barrow. But the trip took a long time, nearly a whole season. The alternative, which was the method the police used, was to go as far as Fort McPherson by steamer, and then 180 miles by small boat to Mackenzie Bay and west to Herschel Island--the last part of the trip along a fairly inhospitable coast. This was an uncomfortable and sometimes hazardous voyage, which was to make for considerable difficulties in both manning and supplying the island post.

After 1900, planning for the new duties in the Arctic was accelerated. In this the police were aided by some persistent prodding from people interested in the project. Frank Oliver, then the Member of Parliament for Edmonton and Clifford Sifton's successor as Minister of the Interior in 1905, was particularly anxious that the government assert its control over the Mackenzie Delta area, and for several years urged action to that effect upon the police and the government.[1] When in the winter of 1902-1903 the government decided to go ahead with an expedition to the western Arctic and another one to Hudson Bay, the plans were drawn up in secret by the government departments concerned, and the money was raised by passing an appropriation through Parliament to extend the fisheries protection service.[2]

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1 White to Sifton, 23 January 1901, Compt. Corr., v. 314.

2 Only the police were concerned with the Mackenzie Delta expedition, but the two were planned at the same time. J.A. Smart, Deputy Minister of the Interior to Sifton, 21 March 1903, Northwest Territories Correspondence, Department of the Interior Papers, Public Archives of Canada, RG 15, B-1a, v. 232.

The official government position is well set out in a memorandum drawn up by the Department of the Interior to justify the police expedition of 1903. It stated that there was no doubt that Canada had absolute title to the area in question, but that a show of the flag was necessary as a preventative measure:

> . . . it is feared that if American citizens are permitted to land and pursue the industries of whaling, fishing and trading with the Indians without complying with the revenue laws of Canada and without any assertion of sovereignty on the part of Canada, unfounded and troublesome claims may hereafter be set up. [1]

No doubt the pleas of the missionaries carried some weight with the government, and Ottawa's desire to collect customs duties was significant too, but the heart of the matter is in the phrase "unfounded and troublesome claims." It was a case of sovereignty, and the government's desire to demonstrate it. This was partly true of the Yukon expedition, but it was probably more true of the Mackenzie venture. The Mackenzie Delta, and Herschel Island in particular, were areas about which the government knew virtually nothing. Except for the Eskimos and an occasional missionary, there were no Canadians or British subjects living at Herschel Island, and no Hudson's Bay Company post--only foreigners, who were indifferent towards Canada's pretensions of sovereignty. There was little immediate danger; the whalers were not likely to proclaim a republic, or try to annex

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1 J.A. Smart, memo, n.d. (probably summer 1903), Compt. Corr., v. 293.

Herschel Island to Alaska. But it was damaging to Canada's concept of her own nationhood to have part of her territory completely outside her control, inhabited by men who might make awkward "claims," and who certainly seemed to be up to no good. It was the realization of the implications of this situation which finally led to action.

There can be little doubt that the Mackenzie Delta expedition of 1903 was in part a reflection of the Alaska Boundary dispute, the final settlement of which took place in the same year. "Unfounded and troublesome claims" had arisen in this affair too (though few today would deny that the Americans had the better case), and it seemed only prudent to the Canadian government that Canada's ownership of the western Arctic be made unequivocally clear. It was not that Ottawa wished to settle a question in the area; no question was to be permitted to arise.

The man selected to lead the expedition to the Mackenzie Delta was Superintendent Charles Constantine, at that time stationed at Fort Saskatchewan, north-east of Edmonton, who as the leader of the original Yukon expedition (when he had first raised the question of policing the western Arctic) was presumably well fitted to carry out these further duties. His orders, issued in the spring of 1903, required him to proceed to Fort McPherson via the Mackenzie River, reporting on all conditions along the route. At Fort McPherson he was to establish a detachment, and then continue on to Herschel Island and set up another

detachment if he thought it advisable to do so. His party consisted of four constables and an N.C.O., Sgt. F. Fitzgerald, who was to become one of the leading figures in the subsequent history of the area.[1] The expedition left Fort Saskatchewan on May 30th 1903, travelled by rail to Athabaska Landing (now the town of Athabasca) and then by steamers, presumably belonging to the Hudson's Bay Company, via Forts Chipewyan, Smith, Simpson, Good Hope, and Norman to Fort McPherson.

As Constantine and his party travelled down river, he made a series of observations on the country. It was, he said, "barren and desolate, swamp, rock, and muskeg being the general character of the country. . . . I do not think that the Mackenzie district, as a whole, will ever support a purely agricultural community; the amount of arable land is very small."[2] But during the trip north, despite the rather dismal picture Constantine painted of the Mackenzie district, the main idea behind the expedition--the establishment and emphasis of the Canadian presence in the area--was never far from his mind. This is clearly shown by an incident which involved an obvious symbol of sovereignty--the flag. As Constantine travelled down the Mackenzie, he was alarmed to see that at several Roman Catholic missions the flag being flown was the French tricolour. This, he thought, was in very bad taste, and

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1 Constantine's report of the expedition was printed in N.W.M.P. Report 1903, I, D.

2 N.W.M.P. Report 1903, C, p. 32.

the sort of thing that was likely to go unchecked if the government did not assert itself in the area. Comptroller White agreed, and suggested that all police posts which might be set up in the region should be liberally supplied with Union Jacks to set an example and for distribution.[1]

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1 Constantine Papers, v. 4. The issue of the flags did not end there. On a later occasion, the police actually tried to enforce the flying of the Union Jack, but with marked lack of success. At Fort Simpson, there was "un incident fâcheux et bien regrettable" when a police inspector ordered the fathers to lower their flag (they were flying the Red Cross that day). Bishop Gabriel Breynat, the future "flying bishop," under whose authority the mission fell, noted the incident as showing that "même dans le Nord, nous eûmes à souffrir, quoique rarement, des activités de certains fanatiques." The fathers complied with the order, under protest, but when Breynat heard of the affair he complained to friends in high places. The result was that the police had to apologize, and a constable involved was transferred to another division. See Gabriel Breynat, Cinquante Ans au Pays des Neiges, 3 vols., (Montreal, 1945-1948), II, pp. 182-185. No date is given for the incident; it probably occurred around 1910. Breynat was certainly a conservative. Some years later, writing about the work of the police in the Northwest Territories, he expressed his view of the role they should play in controlling the natives: "I completely agree with you about the good work done by the R.C.M. Police. . . . they should be empowered with the means to prevent, among the native population, the teaching by the whites and [the] practice of gambling, brewing, birth control, bolchevism, etc." Letter of 27 January 1923 to Col. J.K. Cornwall, President of the Northern Trading Co., Edmonton, J.D. Craig Papers, Public Archives of Canada, RG 85, v. 582, f. 567. It is clear that there existed a certain attitude of Anglo-Protestantism among certain officers of the police (though there were French-Canadians in their ranks); a feeling, common among English-Canadians, which had led to the Manitoba Schools crisis and the controversy over the schools in the two provinces created in 1905.

The small expedition arrived at Fort McPherson without incident, and a detachment was established in quarters belonging to the Hudson's Bay Company--another example of the symbiotic relationship which existed between the police and the Company. Here, the Hudson's Bay Company helped the police, and the police in turn provided law and order, to the Company's benefit. This happened in many places in the north--even in the Yukon, where the companies involved were American. Constantine saw his men settled, told Sgt. Fitzgerald to try for Herschel Island that summer if he thought it possible to do so, and then, with excessive haste, hurried back south to his wife. This may be inferred from a letter from White to Commissioner Perry written the following June, in which he remarked that Constantine's proposed permanent appointment to the command of the Mackenzie district had turned out "just as I thought it would." What the force badly needed, said White, was "a few more unmarried officers."[1] Obtaining volunteers for the really isolated northern posts was, perhaps surprisingly, a serious problem in the early days of police service in the far north.[2] One would never draw such a conclusion from reading the popular accounts of the police in the Arctic, and indeed, once the police had been serving there for a few years, the duties took on a glamour

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1 White to Perry, 6 June 1904, Compt. Lbks., v. 91.

2 The problem was partly solved by permitting officers and senior N.C.O.'s to bring their wives with them. Constantine's wife went to the Yukon, among others, and Supt. J.D. Moodie's wife lived at Churchill during the latter part of his service there.

which ensured a more than adequate supply of volunteers. This was, however, not the case in the beginning, as police records show. Perry, in a confidential letter to White, made what must have been a rather embarrassing proposal for a man who had served so long in the force and who was so proud of its traditions: "In my opinion the stage has now been reached where officers must be selected for duty in the remote regions. We have failed to obtain suitable volunteers for both Mackenzie River and Hudson Bay--The public service must be carried on."[1]

Constantine's own account of his departure from Fort McPherson is considerably less prosaic; it is another of the passages of lyrical romanticism mixed with patriotism which now and again appear in the official documents relating to the police:

> On July 16 [1903], at 4:10 p.m., we left Fort McPherson on the return trip. I felt for the men standing on the beach, as I well remember the feeling that came over our party in the Yukon in 1895, when the last steamer left, being cut off from the outside world, for a year at least; strangers in a strange land, but with the stout hearts and good British pluck which will pull a man through if true to himself.[2]

At first there was little for the police to do at Fort McPherson except show the flag, for Herschel Island was the main target. Officials in Ottawa believed that the difficulties of travel were so great that the island could not be reached in 1903. White, writing in answer to an

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1 6 August 1904, Compt. Corr., v. 293.
2 N.W.M.P. Report 1903, I, D, p. 46.

inquiry on the subject said "I do not think there is any possibility of the police reaching Herschel Island this year . . . We trust that later on the government will furnish a steamer for patrolling Mackenzie Bay, and then it will be possible to reach Herschel Island."[1] White's pessimism was not shared by the man responsible for making the attempt, Sgt. F.J. Fitzgerald, whose audacity and energy were more than equal to the task. Accompanied by a constable, he made a patrol in a small boat from Fort McPherson to Herschel Island in August 1903. He decided to establish a detachment there that year, and managed to persuade the resident missionary, Rev. C.E. Whittaker, to rent him the mission's steam launch to transfer supplies from Fort McPherson to the new detachment. Here his luck ran out, temporarily, when the launch was wrecked in Mackenzie Bay and the supplies partly lost. This incident resulted later in an unseemly wrangle between the police and Whittaker's bishop over the value of the wrecked steamer,[2] but the immediate effect was to leave the two policemen on Herschel Island practically destitute.

Fitzgerald had been given very specific instructions by Constantine on how to manage the detachments; these give a good idea of how the police envisaged their mission. "You have been given the command of this detachment" wrote Constantine, "which carries with it much responsibility; the

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1 White to J.J. Thomas, Guelph, Ont., 23 July 1903, Compt. Corr., v. 89.
2 Compt. Corr., v. 452.

success and the credit of the force in that part of the territories will depend upon your discretion, tact, and management." Fitzgerald was reminded of the solitary nature of his responsibilities: "There will be no one to advise and instruct you in case of difficulties; the Hudson's Bay Company officer, who . . . has been many years at Fort McPherson, will be able to give you advice as to the manner of dealing with the natives, their prejudices and local customs." He was not expected to meddle with the natives; their customs were to be respected as long as they were "consistent with the general law." Nor was Fitzgerald to be allowed to forget that he was a member of a semi-military bureaucracy; spit and polish were not to be neglected, nor was clerical routine:

> Inspections of the arms are to be held WEEKLY and kits EVERY MONTH . . . The men are to be PROPERLY DRESSED . . . A typewriter has been supplied . . . and one of the constables or yourself can easily learn how to use it . . . all your reports should be made in TRIPLICATE . . . [1]

Herschel Island was likely the most physically and psychologically challenging post manned by the police to that time. It was bare, desolate, and windy. There was no wood at all on the island, and coal had to be bought from the whalers. Sgt. Fitzgerald and his constable arrived there, if not quite destitute, at least very badly

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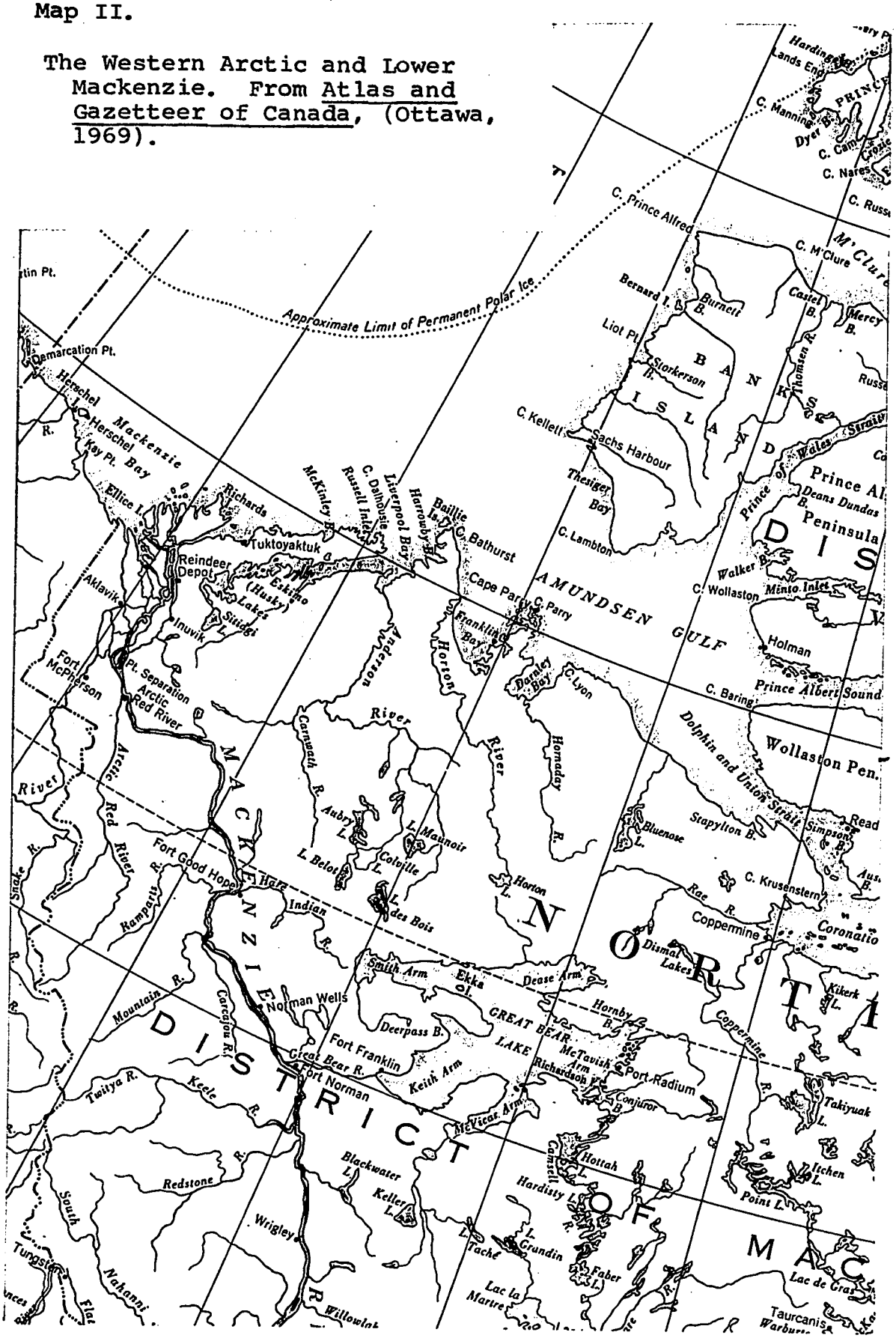
1 Constantine to Fitzgerald, 18 June 1903, Constantine Papers, v. 3.

Map II.

The Western Arctic and Lower Mackenzie. From Atlas and Gazetteer of Canada, (Ottawa, 1969).



supplied. Where were they to find quarters? A tent, even if they had one, was out of the question. There were only six proper buildings on the island--two owned by the Anglican mission, and the other four owned by the Pacific Steam Whaling Company, which was the chief commercial enterprise in the area.[1] As well as the six frame buildings, the island boasted fifteen sod houses, owned by the whaling company, various members of the crews, and the missionary. It was in one of these houses, "ventilated by a hole in the roof, the same opening also serving for a window . . . very damp and dark,"[2] that the police spent their first winter, warmed by coal borrowed from the whaling company. The police were in a somewhat anomalous position. They had come to Herschel Island to emphasize Canada's control over the area, to protect Canadian sovereignty from the inroads, real or imagined, being made upon it by the American whalers. The secondary purpose was to collect customs duties from these ships and whoever else might be trading with the natives, and also to halt the flow of liquor which was so demoralizing them. It must have weakened the moral position of the police considerably to have been dependent for heat and partly for food on these same whalers, and for shelter on the missionary, even though

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1 See N.W.M.P. Report 1903, I, C, p. 32, and I, D, p. 53. The reports of Constantine and Fitzgerald differ in detail concerning Herschel Island. Fitzgerald's is probably the more reliable account, since Constantine got his information at second hand.

2 R.N.W.M.P. Report 1905, I, L, p. 126.

the police paid for these services. In subsequent years, when for a time the police detachment was located in a frame building rented from the Pacific Steam Whaling Company, the anomaly must have been even more pronounced. How could the police carry out their mission, establish government authority and enforce the laws in the area when they owed their lodging to one of the "power groups" on the island, and their warmth and some of their food to another?

The answer is that the police and the whalers were not necessarily adversaries. The captains seem to have been glad to have police around who would presumably help control their crews--for the crews were notoriously unruly.[1] It was not a southern setting, and the whalers were likely glad to have more white men to talk to. Customs duties were collected haphazardly; in 1903 no collections were made, for no one had thought to furnish Fitzgerald with the schedule of duties.

This apparent anomaly never seems to have bothered Fitzgerald, or at least there is no reference to it in the records. He accepted without concern the premise that the success of his mission depended upon the cooperation and generosity of those people he was policing and protecting. He gave orders expecting they would be obeyed, and for the most part they were. Another reason why the whalers were

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1 In 1908 three deserters from the Karluk were brought back to their ship by the police. R.N.W.M.P. Report 1908, L, p. 148.

cooperative was that their economic importance to the region was fast declining when the police arrived. The whaling industry in the western Arctic was not long-lived; every year whales were becoming harder to find. Moreover the market for whales was also declining. The increasing use of petroleum products had caused a sharp drop in the price of whale-oil, and substitutes for whale-bone would soon be discovered. The industry would be virtually extinct by the beginning of World War I. By 1903, most of the whalers were seeking their catch to the east of the Mackenzie Delta, and some were wintering at Baillie Island, about 250 miles to the east of Herschel. It was quite impossible for the police to get to Baillie Island, given their available means of transportation, and although they realized that they were in the wrong place to help the Eskimos, they proceeded to carry out their task by informing whatever whaling captains they could find that the laws of Canada must be obeyed. No one seems to have objected.

Thus the lack of opposition encountered by the police also resulted from the fact that they had little real effect on the operations of the whalers. If the whaling captains wished to avoid paying customs duties, or if they did not wish the police to pry into their business, it was a simple matter to bypass Herschel Island, though little went on that the police did not at least hear about at second or third-hand. The captains did not object to laws which were unenforceable. Thus any successful assertion of sovereignty,

insofar as it manifested itself in making the whaling captains obey the customs law, was more apparent than real. The whalers were accustomed to employ Eskimos for various jobs, and to pay them in trade goods, for money would of course have been useless to them. These goods, imported from the United States, were liable to Canadian customs duty, and getting the captains to pay this duty was a good way of asserting Canadian control. But two police officers could not search a dozen or so ships, especially when the police base in the area was on such uncertain foundations. Fitzgerald was thus reduced to the expedient of asking each captain to give him a list of goods brought in for trade with the natives. The lists, honest or otherwise, were soon forthcoming, and Fitzgerald collected customs duties on that basis, beginning in 1904. Ships which avoided Herschel Island could escape paying duty altogether, and Fitzgerald on at least one occasion was compelled to feign ignorance in order to conceal the weakness of his position: "I could not let the captains know that I knew that tobacco was traded, as that would show them that I could take no action at the present time."[1] The tactic of bluff was most uncharacteristic of the way the police generally operated, and shows how tenuous their position actually was at that time.

Fitzgerald made some significant observations on the

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1 R.N.W.M.P. Report 1905, I, L, p. 129.

Eskimos who lived at Herschel Island. His conclusion was that the stories of debauchery, in the sexual sense of the word, had been greatly exaggerated. He observed that the Eskimo women did not mind being sold into temporary concubinage by their husbands--some, in fact, thought it an honour. They did not resent their inevitable abandonment by the sailors, and were not thought less of by the other Eskimos for the experience; if anything, they were envied. "I cannot reconcile the stories" wrote Fitzgerald, "with the eager manner with which the Esquimaux greets [sic] the arrival of the ships and go on board shaking hands with everyone they meet. If the women were ill-treated and abused as the papers say, they would surely keep away from the ships after one lesson."[1] The Eskimos in general, he thought, were a "fine, manly looking lot . . . the stories about their being diseased and demoralized by the whalers I do not think is true."[2]

Fitzgerald was wrong in his easy assumption that all the tales of harm done to the Eskimos were untrue. If Diamond Jenness' research into the subject is not proof enough, there is the direct evidence from the police themselves. Fitzgerald's cheerful denials are contradicted by a statement by the other detachment at Fort McPherson that "The numbers [of Eskimos] are decreasing very fast. Last

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1 R.N.W.M.P. Report 1905, I, L, p. 128.
2 Ibid.

spring at McPherson out of a band of 80, whose settlement was at Herschell Island, some 70 died of measles."[1]

The discrepancy in the two accounts may be simply explained; it was the old case, as in the Yukon, of the police distinguishing between different kinds of debauchery. The sexual exploitation of the Eskimos, because they themselves did not seem to resent it, was not condemned by the police, who could not understand what all the fuss in the newspapers was about. Physical deterioration, on the other hand, was more obviously to the detriment of the Eskimos, and thus provoked a more direct reaction from the police. In the matter of liquor being sold or given to the natives, the police took what measures they could. Constantine, during his stay at Fort McPherson, tried to impress the natives as much as possible with the fact that liquor was now forbidden. At the same time, he tried to make the new regulations as easy as possible: "one native man . . . I arrested and sentenced to two days' imprisonment, but gave him to understand that if I had not to go to Peel river he would get 30 days. I had to sentence him, if I did not it would have no effect on them."[2] It was the physical abuse--liquor, which brought disease and dissipation--rather than any moral abuse which attracted the attention of the police.

What did the Eskimo think of all this? How did he

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1 N.W.M.P. Report 1903, I, D, p. 49.
2 Ibid., p. 53.

react to this new element in his rapidly-changing way of life? For the police were something new to the Eskimo, another facet of the white man's society which had to be absorbed and comprehended. Before 1900 the Eskimo of the western Arctic had encountered three classes of white men--explorers, traders, and missionaries--each of which had helped to change his way of life for better or for worse. The explorers introduced the Eskimo to the white man's culture; the traders bound him to it; and the missionaries tried to soften the effects of it. As Diamond Jenness points out, a devoted missionary could do much more for the Eskimos than save their souls: "He could strengthen them and restore their spiritual equilibrium . . . The understanding missionary, who knew something both of the old life and the new, could become their anchor; he could counsel them in their troubles and interpret for them the perplexing unknowns."[1] Where did the police, the fourth element, fit into the Eskimo's new life in the Mackenzie Delta?

The police represented government and law. They introduced a new sense of order into Eskimo life. No longer did the missionary have to coax the Eskimo to avoid liquor; the police were now at hand to see that he was denied the opportunity to get drunk. The Eskimo's reaction to this new regime is difficult to assess, for as might be expected,

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1 Jenness, op. cit., p. 15.

few Eskimos left written memoirs. One did, however--a man named Nuligak, one of the Mackenzie Delta group. Nuligak was born in 1895, lived through the whaling period, and as an old man dictated his memoirs, which have been translated into English. The Eskimo's naive delight in the white man's pleasures is shown clearly in Nuligak's account of his first meeting with the whalers in 1902:

> When summer came Uncle Kralogark took us west to Herschel Island . . . Crowds of Eskimos came there. That fall I saw some very large ships. The sailors we met always had something in their mouths, something they chewed. It so intrigued me that I kept staring at their jaws. One certain day that "thing" was given to me. I chewed--it was delicious. It was chewing gum. From that day I was able to recognize some of these white men's things. [1]

Herschel Island, far from being avoided, was a central spot for the Eskimos because of all the delightful things that could be done there: "Finally we reached Herschel. Herschel! The great big town! I felt very happy at the sight of so many houses . . . There were drinking bouts every day. People would drink anything; the Alaskan Inuit are renowned for that."[2] There is no hint of resentment in the book towards the police for bringing all these adventures to an end; some of Nuligak's happiest memories, in fact, concern New Year's parties and games arranged for the natives by the police and the Hudson's Bay Company at Fort McPherson.[3]

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1 Maurice Metayer, trans., I, Nuligak, (Toronto, 1966), p. 29.
2 Ibid., pp. 31-33.
3 Ibid., p. 135.

The Eskimos never seem to have objected to the new regulations; they were not onerous, and the police represented, to a certain extent, merely more white men bringing wonderful things to them. And the new regulations were not imposed all at once; the police did not expect the Eskimos to obey all the laws of Canada completely and immediately. They treated the Eskimos leniently and with restraint, so that later, when there were episodes of serious trouble between Eskimos and whites, the police were able to take control of the situation without any serious resistance from the natives. This leniency came, in part, from the fact that the Eskimos' legal position was vague; they did not fall under the Indian Act, yet they obviously had to be treated differently from whites. There was thus a large element of improvisation in police policy towards them.

In its initial stages the police expansion into the Mackenzie Delta seemed to be going very well. The police at Fort McPherson had established themselves without difficulty, and those at Herschel, though partly impotent, and operating under a burden of obligation to the people they had been sent up to watch, had met with no serious opposition. The few laws which were applicable to the situation were enforced. Drunken Indians and Eskimos were arrested, convicted, and subjected to token imprisonment (there was no place to lock them up). Those whalers who were within reach of the police were made to obey the

customs laws and to stop selling liquor to the natives. And the government had finally put a force on the ground in that remote north-western corner of Canada to show that Ottawa was aware of its existence and was determined to exercise control over it. Thus the initial task of the police had been successfully carried out, and the foundations laid for a new phase of police operations in the Arctic.

CHAPTER VII

TO HUDSON BAY AND THE EASTERN ARCTIC

The second new area of concern for the police after 1900 was Hudson Bay. This region had had, of course, a very long history before the Canadian government bestirred itself to think about it. The bay itself and its coastal areas had been fairly well known since Henry Hudson explored them in the summer of 1610. Many of the names of the geographical features of the bay are now well over three hundred years old; Cape Wolstenholme and Digges Island, for instance, were both named after patrons of Hudson's voyage.[1] Though it has a much longer history than the Mackenzie Delta, Hudson Bay presents certain parallels which are worth noting. Both the delta and the bay had first been opened up, after the initial exploration, by the Hudson's Bay Company. Both had a mixed population of Indians and Eskimos. The two regions had both been turned over to Canada shortly after Confederation (although the Mackenzie Delta was not part of the original Rupert's Land). There were foreign whaling operations in Hudson Bay similar to those in the Beaufort Sea. The threat to Canadian sovereignty, though less severe than in the western Arctic, was still present in Hudson Bay, though here it concerned the question of territorial waters

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1 See the Dictionary of Canadian Biography, I, p. 374, for a short account of the early history of the bay.

rather than land use.

Two nations dominated the whaling industry of north-eastern Canada. A Scottish fleet came out each summer to hunt whales in the waters of Baffin Bay; the Americans operated in Hudson Bay, on the west side, near and around Southampton Island. They had a wintering station on the coast of the bay at Cape Fullerton. The influence of these whalers on the Eskimos of Hudson Bay was less deleterious than that of the Mackenzie Bay whalers on the Eskimos of the western Arctic, insofar as there were fewer ships in Hudson Bay, and the whalers there did not distribute liquor quite as freely. On the other hand, the traders and whalers had been in Hudson Bay for a very much longer time than their counterparts in the Mackenzie Delta, and thus the Eskimos and Indians had had a much longer and heavier dose of cultural dislocation in the more southerly region. Diamond Jenness describes the resulting "buckling" of native Eskimo culture:

> Metal pots and pans ousted the cooking-pots of stone; garments of cotton and wool overlay and underlay the native garments of fur . . . The Eskimo hunters threw away their self-made bows and arrows to equip themselves with firearms, abandoned their hunting kayaks and their umiaks . . . and adopted the clinker-built whaleboats that the ships' captains left behind. 1

This was unfortunate, yet the issue which moved the government to take positive action in Hudson Bay was wider

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1 Jenness, op. cit., pp. 11-12. A good short history of whaling in the area is R.A. Stackpole, American Whaling in Hudson Bay, 1861-1919, (Mystic, Conn., 1969).

than the plight of the native people. As in the Mackenzie Delta, it was a matter of establishing effective government control. The presence of American whalers in Hudson Bay acting as if the Canadian government did not exist, might be construed as casting doubts on Canada's assertion that it was a "closed" sea. And the bay was not the only area of concern; what Jenness calls "the spectre of foreign intervention"[1] had appeared farther north. Between 1898 and 1902 the Norwegian explorer Otto Sverdrup had discovered some of the islands which now bear his name, had landed on them and had claimed them for Norway. This was an alarming development for Canada, because its claim to the Arctic archipelago rested merely on Britain's claim to all islands north of the mainland then known, and any other that might later be discovered. This claim might logically be disputed by a government whose representative had been the first to set foot on hitherto unknown territory, especially as long as discovery was the only criterion for sovereignty, in the absence of further control activities in the region. This was a very tricky situation, and it seemed that the solution was to go north, wave the flag, and establish a presence in the region as soon as possible.

But this expedition was not to be entirely up to the police. Intended as a much grander affair than the Mackenzie Delta expedition, it was placed under the command of A.P. Low,

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1 Jenness, op. cit., p. 19.

a geologist by profession, who had done a good deal of exploring for the government in previous years. It was, in short, to be a government rather than merely a police expedition, showing the importance which Ottawa placed on the project.[1] It will be remembered that 1903, the year of the two Arctic expeditions, was also the year of the settlement of the Alaska Boundary dispute and of maximum police strength in the Yukon. Although it would be too much to say that there was a causal relationship between these events, it was not entirely coincidental that they occurred in the same year. As far as the police were concerned, the purpose of the voyage was to send a small party of men north to establish a detachment somewhere on the shore of Hudson Bay, to serve as the nucleus of government authority in the area.

The first intimation the police had that there was something new in store for them was late in 1902, when Comptroller White was told by the Deputy Minister of the Interior that problems of sovereignty and whalers were being considered, both in Mackenzie and Hudson Bays.[2] Far from being pleased at the opportunity to extend police control to an entirely new part of the country, White was aghast at the whole idea. He objected strenuously to "a plan so

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1 A good account of the voyage from the government's point of view is A.P. Low, Cruise of the Neptune, (Ottawa, 1906). There had been four previous expeditions to Hudson Bay, mainly exploratory, in 1884, 1885, 1886, and 1897.

2 J.A. Smart to White, 4 December 1902, Compt. Corr., v. 314.

foreign to anything the Police have in the past been called upon to perform."[1] He held that any legal functions on the trip could adequately be carried out by "a magistrate selected from the East, with three or four of the crew sworn in as Constables."[2] White's main objections to the scheme seem to have been based on its exclusively nautical nature--that it was essentially a naval patrol and therefore foreign to police training and experience. He was also not pleased by the fact that the expedition was to be under the control of the Department of Marine and Fisheries, making the police in effect no more than passengers on the ship. This objection was an echo of the long-standing police dislike of being subordinated to other civil service agencies, which came out most strongly during the Yukon service of the police.

White went to Clifford Sifton to plead his case, but as he reported to Commissioner Perry in August 1903, "I was bowled over in my efforts to have the Police freed from the mission to Hudson's Bay."[3] Sifton told White that in the event a landing was made somewhere in the bay, the police "would know exactly what to do in establishing a system of control--whilst anyone who might have been appointed from the East would have lacked the necessary experience."[4] This line of thinking on Sifton's part seems quite reasonable,

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1 White to J.A. Smart, 16 July 1903, Compt. Corr., v. 293.
2 White to Perry, 23 July 1903, ibid.
3 White to Perry, 11 August 1903, ibid.
4 Ibid.

and one wonders in retrospect what all the fuss was about. The police had performed very well in unheard-of corners of the Yukon and north-western British Columbia. Why should they not do as well on the shores of Hudson Bay? Perhaps the fear lurking deep in the minds of police officials was best expressed by White when he wrote "I dreaded having any of our men landed away up in Baffin's Bay or Cumberland Sound . . ."[1] These areas were the chief whaling grounds for the Scottish ships, and White apparently feared that police posts might be required in places where they would be completely beyond the control of police headquarters, since the N.W.M.P. did not then have a large supply boat. This fear was to prove groundless, however, as the police were not assigned to that part of the Arctic for another twenty years, by which time the whalers were gone. Instead, the effort was directed at Hudson Bay, the locale of the American whalers.

White did make one objection which was quite sensible, and which proved to be prescient. He said, in the letter to the Deputy Minister of the Interior quoted earlier, that the best way of policing Hudson Bay was to make the police mobile--that is, to provide them with a boat, "able to move from place to place, land where necessary, or overhaul and search a whaling schooner or trader. To make the police . . . a fixture on so long a line of coast . . . would

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1 White to Perry, 11 August 1903, Compt. Corr., v. 293.

simply be hoisting a warning signal to illicit traders to give that particular point a wide berth . . ."[1] Although he overestimated the danger from illegal traders, White was correct, as it later proved, when he suggested that the police would be seriously hampered in their operations by lack of mobility.

White's objections were overruled by his superiors, the Deputy Minister and by Sifton himself, and plans for the expedition went ahead. It was made clear from the beginning that the essential purposes of the trip were scientific investigation and sovereignty. As the Deputy Minister put it, the voyage was "for the purpose of patrolling and exploring and establishing the authority of the Government on the points in question."[2] But as far as the police were concerned, it was still all a bit vague. They were going north, but exactly where and to do what no one seemed to know:

> . . . [it is] proposed to send a commissioned officer . . . with four or five men who will establish the post at the place found to be most convenient. . . . The post will be provisioned for two years but it is the intention that the patrol will return and visit the post every year. . . . our knowledge of the northern portion of the territories in question being so unexact no very definite instructions can be given as to the location of the post.[3]

No wonder White had qualms.

In contrast to the Mackenzie Delta expedition, which

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1 White to J.A. Smart, 16 July 1903, Compt. Corr., v. 293.
2 J.A. Smart, memo, n.d., ibid.
3 Ibid.

left in the same year, the one to Hudson Bay received fairly wide publicity. In the light of the much-publicized Alaska Boundary dispute, the issue of territorial sovereignty was one which interested the newspapers and their readers. The Toronto Globe explained the purpose of the venture neatly: "Canada claims all arctic America, but she has done little or nothing in the way of actual occupation to make good her title, so is now repairing this neglect before any diplomatic friction arises."[1] The Globe predicted, incorrectly, that a detachment would be set up that year at Chesterfield Inlet, and rejoiced that "Canada's rule will thus be visibly demonstrated there."[2] Another newspaper said, also incorrectly, that the expedition intended to "take possession as far north as possible, raising the British flag over lands heretofore looked upon as neutral . . ."[3] The assertion that any of the lands to be visited by the Neptune were "looked upon as neutral" was certainly incorrect as far as the Canadian government was concerned. However, whether the reports were correct or not, the news of the expedition met with a considerable burst of approving publicity on the part of the press, and the government was congratulated on its enterprise.

The officer selected to lead the police contingent was Superintendent J.D. Moodie, who had earlier proven his

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1 31 October 1903.
2 Ibid.
3 Ottawa Evening Journal, 19 October 1903.

stamina as the leader of the party which blazed the Peace River-Yukon route in 1897-98. The rest of the party comprised a non-commissioned officer and four constables.

There is a curious discrepancy between the official purpose of this expedition and the purpose which the newspapers read into it. The press seems to have felt that the expedition was essentially a punitive one--that the principle of Canadian sovereignty was about to be roughly or violently asserted in the eastern Arctic. As the Ottawa Evening Journal put it, the Neptune was sailing north "with the object of expelling any American whalers found fishing in those waters."[1] But this was only wishful thinking, a popular reaction to the events of the Alaska Boundary controversy. The official attitude towards the situation was considerably less rigid. Moodie's instructions put the position nicely: "It is not the wish of the Government that any harsh or hurried enforcement of the laws of Canada shall be made . . ."[2] Instead of "hurried enforcement," Moodie was instructed to "impress upon the captains of whaling and trading vessels, and the natives, the fact that after reasonable notice and warning the laws will be enforced as in other parts of Canada."[3] Evidently Ottawa did not wish to cause any incidents which might lead to a diplomatic clash with the United States--a

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1 5 October 1903. Public reaction in Canada to the outcome of this controversy was short-lived but intense. For a popular account see H.G. Classen, Thrust and Counter-thrust, (Chicago, 1965), chapter V.

2 Unsigned memo, 5 August 1903, Compt. Corr., v. 293.

3 Ibid.

clash which might have brought Canada's claims to sovereignty under the direct and unfriendly scrutiny of that republic.

The Neptune was a 465 ton Newfoundland sealing schooner, built in 1873, and strongly constructed to withstand great pressures of ice.[1] Cleaning and alterations were carried out in the spring and early summer of 1903, and on August 23rd, with a crew of police, observers from the Department of Marine and Fisheries and from the Geological Survey, a photographer, and the ship's crew, the Neptune steamed out of Halifax harbour. The ship sailed as far north as Cumberland Sound, then back to Port Burwell (which A.P. Low thought would make a good customs station for traffic going into Hudson Bay).[2] It then sailed into Hudson Bay, stopping at Cape Wolstenholme, Cape Fullerton, and Chesterfield Inlet. It was at Fullerton Harbour that Moodie decided to build his post, because whalers were reputed to winter there, so it was at Fullerton that the Neptune spent the winter of 1903-04.

The first winter was very difficult for the small detachment, even though they spent a good deal of their time living on the ship. The expedition's physician, Dr. Faribault, became violently insane shortly after the expedition set out, and had to be given constant care and

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1 A.P. Low, op. cit., p. 3.

2 Ibid., p. 7. Port Burwell would be to the eastern Arctic what Herschel Island was to the western. An R.C.M.P. detachment was established there, but not until 1920.

supervision by the police until he died in April 1904. The police duty must have been onerous, for Moodie requested extra pay for his men for performing it.[1] However, the only thing the police accomplished during this first winter was to build several small buildings for themselves, scout the immediate country, and make plans for the future. No action was taken in regard to whaling activities in the bay; there was only one ship near Fullerton, and Moodie had no means of reaching any others. His instructions on this subject had been vague; he wrote to White "I am informed that there are several American whalers in Hudson's Bay. I have no instructions as to their right to fish there, and shall do nothing in this way unless I receive definite instructions next year. I am writing to the Minster of Customs [for information] . . ."[2]

Moodie also drew up an elaborate plan for posts in Hudson Bay and the eastern Arctic. Eight posts would be necessary, he thought--an annual visit by a government ship was not sufficient for the purposes of supervising the area and exercising effective control over it. A single visit from a ship "will give but very slight grounds on which to uphold a claim to a territory peopled by native & whitemen other than Canadians."[3] Moodie wanted the police headquarters for Hudson Bay established at Cape Wolstenholme,

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1 Moodie to White, 9 December 1903, Compt. Corr., v. 281.
2 Moodie to White, 6 September 1903, ibid., v. 293.
3 Moodie to White, 9 December 1903, ibid., v. 281.

which he thought was the natural port of entry for the area, with detachments at Fullerton, Churchill, Port Harrison, Repulse Bay, and Chesterfield in the bay, and Blacklead Island and Pond Inlet in the eastern Arctic whaling grounds.[1] Twenty-seven police would be required. He also wanted the police to acquire a steamer which could carry a hundred tons of cargo, so that they would be able to supply their own detachments and not be dependent on other government agencies or private charters.[2] Moodie's assessment of the requirements of the area proved to be surprisingly accurate, for eventually police posts were set up at all the locations he recommended except Cape Wolstenholme and Blacklead Island. For the time being, however, these plans were too ambitious for the resources of the police. White reported to Sir Wilfrid Laurier that he was satisfied with what had been accomplished: "I gather that everything has gone on satisfactorily. They wintered at Fullerton . . . established a post there and built huts, and I feel sure that we have now made a fair start in opening up those regions."[3]

In fact the police had made only a very small start; it was not until the next year, 1904, that they began to make significant progress towards establishing themselves in the area. In July 1904, Moodie left Hudson Bay on the

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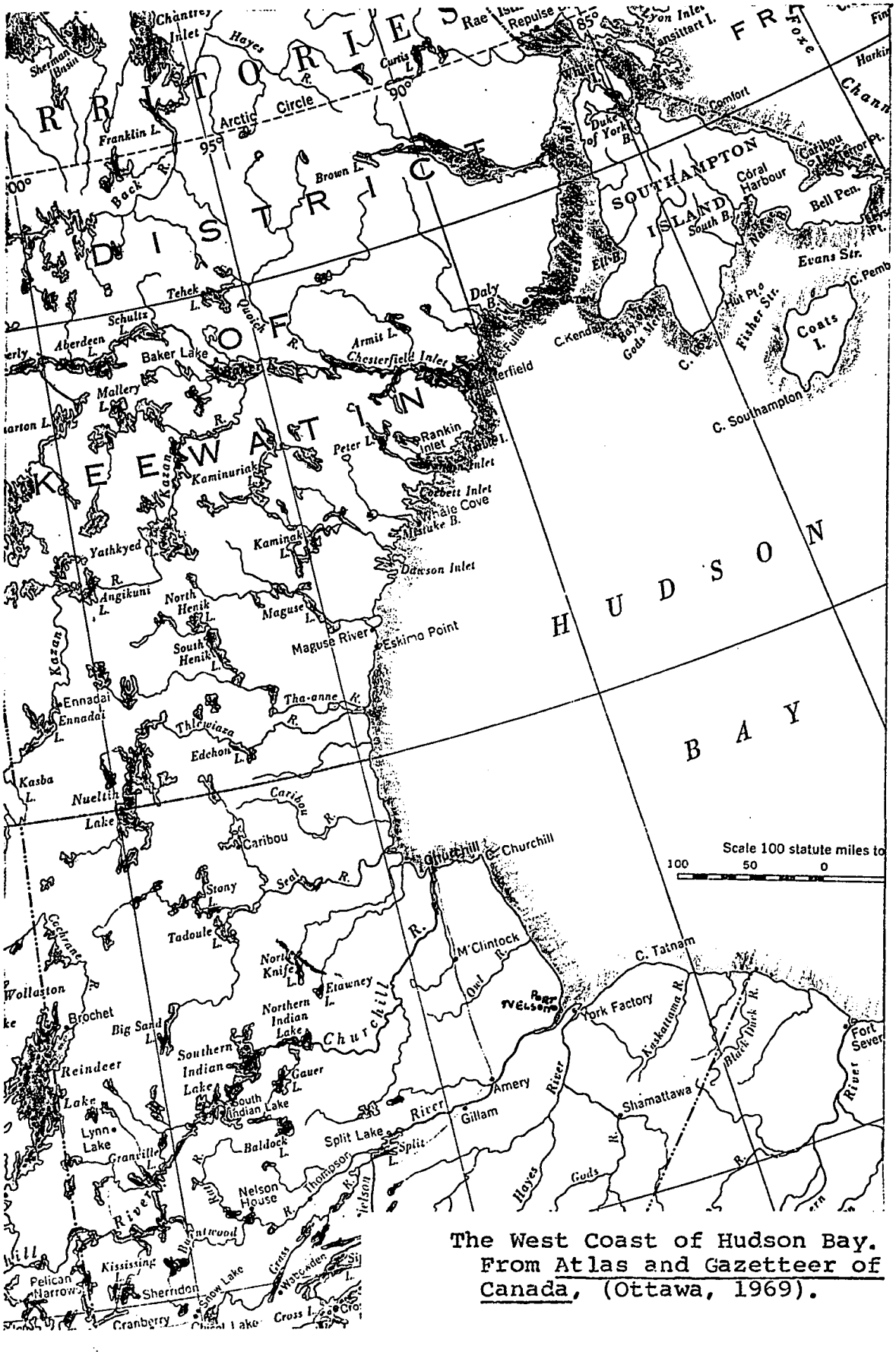
1 Moodie to White, 9 December 1903, Compt. Corr., v. 281.
2 R.N.W.M.P. Report 1904, IV, p. 5.
3 White to Laurier, 8 August 1904, Compt. Corr., v. 293.

Map III.



The West Coast of Hudson Bay. From Atlas and Gazetteer of Canada, (Ottawa, 1969).

Neptune, leaving his N.C.O. and two constables behind, with instructions to make a patrol by boat north to Repulse Bay, where whaling ships were more likely to be found.[1] Moodie's task was to report to his superiors in the police and in the government, and he was armed with a variety of observations, suggestions, and plans. His report was valuable to the government, insofar as it helped accomplish the goal of the police, and also because it gave a good idea of some of the immediate problems involved in trying to establish effective control over the Hudson Bay region.

Moodie described the traders as a baneful influence on the Eskimos, who were by nature cheerful, honest, and hard-working. "They are not beggars, but expect to pay for whatever they receive."[2] The traders took advantage of this honesty by charging high prices for their goods; a ten dollar rifle cost the Eskimo fifteen musk-ox skins worth fifty dollars each.[3] There was an even worse result than this larceny--the Eskimos' desire for trade goods was so great that they were slaughtering every musk-ox they could find, and the traders were delightedly encouraging them to do so.[4] Moodie reported that he had seriously feared that the musk-ox in the Fullerton area would be completely exterminated. He was in a quandary; there was no point in declaring a closed season on the animals, for the Eskimos needed them

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1 R.N.W.M.P. Report 1904, IV, p. 5.
2 Compt. Corr., v. 281.
3 Ibid.
4 R.N.W.M.P. Report 1904, IV, p. 12.

for food. In this situation, Moodie improvised, and laid down his own law. Instead of enforcing a closed season on musk-ox, he told the traders that the export of musk-ox skins was now completely prohibited. This seemed to him "The only method which would be of practical use."[1] As had been the case in the Yukon, the police were "making up the laws as they go along."[2] Moodie justified these somewhat irregular proceedings on the grounds that haste was essential: "The Era[3] was on the point of despatching a large party of natives to hunt these animals, and any action to be effective, had to be taken at once. The natives did not go."[4] Once again, boldness on the part of the police solved a dilemma where more cautious methods--such as writing to Ottawa and waiting a year for a reply--would have failed. Of course Moodie's writ ran only as far as he could travel--outside this area his dictates could safely be ignored.

This incident was in fact the first in a theme which runs all through the police service in Hudson Bay--the rapacity of the traders. There are numerous references in

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1 R.N.W.M.P. Report 1904, IV, p. 12.
2 Under the Northwest Game Act of 1894, musk-oxen could not be killed between March 20th and October 15th, but there was no other restriction on hunting them. They were not completely protected until 1917.
3 The Era, commanded by Captain George Comer, was the only ship in Moodie's immediate vicinity.
4 R.N.W.M.P. Report 1904, IV, p. 12.

police letters and reports to the traders--the Hudson's Bay Company and more especially the independent traders--damning their greed and their tendency to cheat the natives. In reference to the Era incident, Moodie went on to report that "The return given the Esquimaux for valuable furs and whalebone is a mere nothing."[1] By way of example he noted that the traders were giving a hundred primers for Winchester rifles in return for one musk-ox skin. The primers cost ten cents a hundred in New York; the robe was worth fifty dollars. "Everything owned by the trader is valued at twenty times its price," he wrote, "and everything owned by the native is cut down in value a hundredfold."[2]

It might perhaps be said in defence of the traders that they had a very large overhead, that the volume of trade was small, and that goods cost a great deal to bring to Fullerton from the United States. Most of the trading vessels were, however, whaling ships, for which trading with the natives was only a sideline designed to make some extra money during the winter months; the main overhead was for the whaling operations. And even if these ships were solely traders, as became the case later on, ten cents for a fifty dollar skin seems an absurd profit margin. It might be argued, as some traders no doubt did argue, that the Eskimos had all the skins they needed, and that rifles and ammunition were a wonderful boon to them; if the Eskimos

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1 R.N.W.M.P. Report 1904, IV, p. 113.
2 Ibid.

did not feel cheated, and apparently they did not, why should the police object? There were two good answers to this question. As the ethnologists pointed out, the demand for guns and other goods had been created by the traders, who, as Jenness said, had "forced the aboriginal culture to buckle."[1] The white man's culture, because it made life easier for the Eskimos, had become as habitual to them as tobacco is to the chain-smoker, and it was the trader who was the chief purveyor of the material goods of this culture. In the second place, if the musk-oxen were seriously depleted in numbers or wiped out altogether, as seemed likely to happen, the Eskimos would have lost what little independence they still retained. They then would have been dependent on the white man for food as well as for everything else they needed, and the white man was likely to abandon them as soon as trading slackened. It was this possibility which moved Moodie to issue his edict, along with his mistrust of Americans who traded in Hudson Bay free from worries about Canadian customs regulations.

In private conversations with police officials in Ottawa, as well as in written reports and letters, Moodie emphasized the barriers which lay in the way of the police making any significant impression on the Hudson Bay area. The difficulties involved in supporting life and travelling, he said, "are much greater than even in the Yukon."[2] The

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1 Op. cit., p. 11.
2 R.N.W.M.P. Report 1904, IV, p. 5.

task of supplying a base from southern Canada was relatively easy in Hudson Bay, except for the fact that storms sometimes blew up suddenly and put supply ships in danger; the Hudson's Bay Company had supplied its posts by sea for well over two hundred years. The real difficulty lay in patrolling the coastline north of Fullerton to Repulse Bay, or south towards Churchill and York Factory. In the short summer, patrols could be made by boat, but there were very few places along the coast where a boat could be safe from a sudden storm, as the police were to find out later to their cost. Even in the middle of winter there was often a lead of water half a mile to several miles wide paralleling the west coast of the bay; this made travelling by sled very difficult. Moreover, there were very few trees along the coast, and for long stretches none at all, so that fuel for heating and cooking would have to be carried in the form of oil or kerosene. This was in sharp constrast to the Yukon, which was heavily wooded in the valleys. Finally, the distances involved were much greater than in the Yukon; it is more than two hundred miles from Fullerton to Repulse Bay, and more than five hundred from Fullerton to Churchill. Moodie was being no more than realistic when he reported that "Under the existing circumstances and strength of the police in Hudson bay, patrolling to any extent is next to impossible."[1] And, it must be added, if patrolling was impossible, then the attempt on the part of the police to

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1 R.N.W.M.P. Report 1904, IV, p. 5.

demonstrate Canadian control over the area would not be successful. On the other hand, even if the police were never to leave Fullerton, their very presence in the bay was bound to have some value in this respect.

Moodie's solution to this dilemma--a series of posts strategically located on both sides of the bay and at the entrance to it--has already been described. With all these posts in operation, patrols would not have to be as long, and could therefore be made more easily and more safely. The large steamer required could supply the posts and keep an eye on the whalers in areas where patrolling was not feasible. For liaison with the Eskimos--translating, hunting for meat, and general work--he also wanted two natives employed at each post. They were to be paid $4.50 a month and their keep, a sum which seems ungenerous, but with which they apparently would be well pleased.[1]

Thus the first year in Hudson Bay seemed to be reasonably successful for the police. They had not accomplished much, but they had done what their resources permitted. Moodie had handled his task well; his only false step lay in giving a newspaper reporter an interview on his return which produced the following sensational headline: "Work suffered from Politics: Hudson's Bay Expedition Bungled from Start: Major Moodie's Hands Tied: Given Incompetent

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1 R.N.W.M.P. Report 1904, IV, p. 8; also Compt. Corr., v. 281.

Assistants, an Insufficient Force and Absurd Instructions."[1] In response to a sharp query from White, Moodie denied he had said anything of the kind.[2] He had learned from this experience, perhaps, not to grumble indiscreetly in front of unfriendly newspaper reporters.

It seemed then that the police would be required to extend their operations in Hudson Bay. It was a prospect which did not please Comptroller White, who had not yet resigned himself to the course of events. Even after the first year's duty on the part of the police, he was still trying to get them relieved of it. As he wrote to Perry "I did my best to get the Police released from this Hudson's Bay duty, but without success."[3] In another letter he explained the reasons for his continuing objections: "I feel sure that whilst a lot of responsibility will be thrown on the Police Officers, we shall have very little to say about the movements of the vessel, and general jurisdiction. However we must bide our time and adapt ourselves to circumstances."[4] In this fear White was only partially correct, for the 1904-05 voyage was entirely a police affair, rather than being, as the previous voyage had been, largely a scientific venture.

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1 Toronto Mail and Empire, 27 August 1904. This was of course a Conservative newspaper, sniffing for scandal.
2 Moodie to White, 30 August 1904, Compt. Corr., v. 280.
3 White to Perry, 6 July 1904, Compt. Corr., v. 293.
4 White to Perry, 18 June 1904, ibid.

Although the friction on the first voyage to Hudson Bay was largely a figment of journalistic imagination, that on the second was quite real. The ship chosen for the trip was the Gauss, re-christened the Arctic, commanded by Captain J.E. Bernier, a French-Canadian of great skill and experience in handling ships. Bernier, at the height of his career, had conceived a passion for Arctic exploration, and had raised considerable sums of public and private money to finance a "Canadian Polar Expedition," in which he and the Arctic would drift across the Arctic Ocean in the manner of Nansen, hopefully crossing the Pole. However, in the spring of 1904, Bernier was enraged to find himself "suddenly ordered to put ashore three years' supplies and proceed to Hudson Bay, practically under the orders of the Mounted Police to ascertain whether a certain . . . ship captain was engaged in selling liquor to the natives."[1] Bernier said in retrospect "I will not dwell on the disappointment that overwhelmed me when this turn in events occurred."[2] But in 1904 he did dwell on it, and there was a good deal of squabbling during the voyage. On his return to southern Canada in 1905, Bernier gave a newspaper interview in which he bitterly condemned Moodie, calling him "an impossible man to work with . . . He wished to rule me and my men as he ruled his own subordinates. He even went so

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1 J.E. Bernier, Master Mariner and Arctic Explorer, (Ottawa, 1939), p. 305. This would refer to Captain Comer and the Era; it was, if true, only a small part of the object of the trip.

2 Ibid.

far as to say that he intended the boat to be run like a barracks, with himself in command."[1] The disagreement went deeper than Bernier's hurt dignity: "Just to give you one example of Major Moody's unaccomodating disposition, there were some of us wished to buy furs from the natives, not at all for trading purposes, but simply for relatives and friends. This he refused to allow us to do. . . . If they were to give me two boats like this I would never work with him again."[2]

In this respect it should be noted that the police were themselves guilty of the same impulses, and the matter of police trading with the natives proved a problem in the early days of their service in Hudson Bay. There is a close parallel with the earlier situation in the Yukon--just as the police there wished to prospect for gold, and in fact did so until they were forbidden to, so some of the police in Hudson Bay saw no reason why they should not supplement their wages by a bit of fur-trading. Inspector E.A. Pelletier, who was Moodie's second-in-command on the 1904-05 expedition, went so far as to write directly to Sir Wilfrid Laurier, asking him if it were true that the officer commanding the R.N.W.M.P. in Hudson Bay had "le Monopole exclusif de la traite, ou si je puis trafiquer avec les indiens les quelques articles de traite que j'ai emporté avec moi . . ."[3] Laurier wrote to White in some annoyance, telling

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1 Montreal Star, 10 October 1905.
2 Ibid. The legality of Moodie's action was doubtful.
3 Pelletier to Laurier, 27 January 1905, Compt. Corr., v. 298.

him that it was forbidden for the police to trade for profit.[1] Apparently it was not just a case of "quelques articles de traite," as Pelletier had suggested; Moodie reported that his subordinate had been trading for furs on a large scale until ordered to stop.[2] Eventually the rule was relaxed to permit the police and the ship's crew to collect "souvenirs in reasonable quantities . . . for their mothers, wives, and sweethearts," but "indiscriminate trading . . . should be forbidden."[3] Since 1899 it had been illegal for a policeman to engage in trade or business, and the police had to be careful to keep their hands clean in matters of this sort, for the sake of their public image and their effectiveness on the job. The memory of the "Yukon Scandals" was still fresh, which although not involving the police directly, still had many unpleasant possibilities. Neither the government nor the police wanted anything of that sort in Hudson Bay.[4]

In the spring of 1904 the usual hurried preparations went ahead. As before, the instructions given to Supt. Moodie were rather vague. White told him that "The boarding of vessels which may be met; the establishing of Police posts . . . the introduction of the system of Government control as prevails in the organized portion of Canada, will be assigned to the Mounted Police."[5] But what did

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1 Laurier to White, 20 April 1905, Compt. Corr., v. 298.
2 Moodie to White, 22 September 1905, ibid. But Moodie was a prickly man, and it is hard to know what he considered a "large scale."
3 White to Moodie, 2 May 1905, ibid.
4 The subject of trade is explored further in chapter IX.
5 White, memo, 1 August 1904, Compt. Corr., v. 293.

this last part mean? What exactly was the "system of Goverment control" which Moodie was supposed to introduce? He expended considerable effort in trying to find out, and the answers he got are worth examining for what they show of the latitude the government gave the police, and of the vagueness and generality with which the whole project was launched.

Moodie wrote to the Department of Marine and Fisheries, asking what they wanted him to do about foreign vessels fishing in Hudson Bay. The answer was not very helpful. The Deputy Minister told him that the government had not made up its mind as to whether or not the provisions of the Convention of 1818 were to be applied to Hudson Bay.[1] Moodie was advised to "use your own judgement . . . it is not the wish of the Government that hurried or harsh measures with reference to the laws should be made."[2] This was not very helpful, probably deliberately so; Moodie was told essentially to make up the laws as he went along, and interpret them as he saw fit. That he intended to follow this advice is clearly brought out in a letter in which he

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1 The Convention of 1818 had barred Americans from the "inshore fisheries" of British North America. This prohibition had been withdrawn by the Reciprocity Treaty of 1854 and again by the Treaty of Washington in 1871. The United States terminated the fisheries clauses of this latter treaty in 1885, so in 1904 it was open to the Canadian government to ban Americans from fishing in Hudson Bay, which it considered to be its historic territorial waters.

2 F. Gourdeau to Moodie, 18 September 1904, Compt. Corr., v. 293.

stated his intention to apply the laws according to individual cases: "In the cases of offences by natives I would take chances and try them--as I have done before in the N.W.T.--but where a whiteman was concerned I would not take chances of an action for false imprisonment or whatever the penalty might be."[1]

Moodie also worried that he was on shaky ground in the matter of enforcing Canada's authority over the whaling grounds of the bay. He had been told to enforce the laws, but had been given no assurance that he would be backed in case of dispute. Before returning south in the summer of 1904, he had issued a notice to whalers warning them that they were breaking the law, and that although he was being lenient for the time being, they must be prepared to obey the laws in the next year:

> My instructions are that the laws are to be strictly enforced, after due notice has been given, although it is not the wish of the Canadian Government that any harsh measures should be adopted. As I consider that in certain cases it would be such were the law put in force at once I have not done so . . . The Government may . . . instruct that the law be enforced during 1905 and thereafter . . . you may make arrangements to meet the circumstances which may arise.[2]

Now Moodie asked the government to support him in this edict and in the one forbidding the export of musk-ox skins: "if my notice . . . is not confirmed--and it is found that it

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1 Moodie to White, 10 September 1904, Compt. Corr., v. 293.
2 "Notice to all Masters of Whalers, Agents of Stations, and all whom it may concern," 19 July 1904, Compt. Corr., v. 408.

was not law--suits may be entered to recover damages for loss of trade. Unless my action is approved and confirmed before I sail again next week--I shall on my arrival at Fullerton be compelled to withdraw the notice and allow the slaughter to continue."[1]

But no decision was immediately forthcoming, and Moodie was compelled to improvise laws and regulations during the next winter as well. It was not until the summer of 1906 that the government finally made up its mind on the question of asserting its sovereignty over the waters of Hudson Bay. In July 1906 Parliament passed an act amending the Fisheries Act, which, said the Deputy Minister of Marine and Fisheries, "asserts that Hudson Bay is wholly territorial water of Canada, and therefore the licence fee of Fifty Dollars per annum will be chargeable on all vessels . . . British or foreign."[2] Ironically, by the time this regulation was promulgated, it no longer affected the police. In January 1905 the police reached an understanding with the Department of Marine and Fisheries by which the responsibility for Hudson Bay was divided between the two government agencies. The police, hampered by the lack of a patrol

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1 Moodie to White, 10 September 1904, Compt. Corr., v. 293.

2 F. Gourdeau to White, 18 July 1906, Compt. Corr., v. 408. The Arctic went north again that year, and cairns were set up in several places in the eastern Arctic, including Cape Herschel on Ellesmere Island, which had been the location of Sverdrup's base camp. In each cairn were deposited notices stating that the Mounted Police were stationed at Fullerton to enforce the law, especially the customs law. See J.E. Bernier, Cruise of the "Arctic", 1906-7, (Ottawa, 1909), p. 14.

boat, which they could not afford to buy, retained control only of the western shore of the bay. The Department of Marine and Fisheries, which was not limited in this way, was given the responsibility of supervising the rest of the bay, including the eastern shore.[1] This is the reason why the police, during this early period, extended their operations only along the western shore, and inland from this coast. The posts which are now on the eastern shore, Port Harrison and Great Whale River, are products of a later era.

One of the oddest aspects of the 1904 voyage of the Arctic was the way in which authority over the cruise was divided. As previously mentioned, Moodie was given wide, if vague powers, and Captain Bernier was limited to "command and navigation of the vessel."[2] But serious decisions about the expedition's progress were to be made by--of all things--a committee:

> In the event of doubt or dispute arising . . . The senior officer of the Mounted Police, the Captain of the vessel, and a Third, to be named by the Minister of the Interior, will constitute a board to consult and decide as to the course to be pursued; the Police officer to be President of the Board.[3]

It is little wonder that disagreements and acrimony arose between Moodie and Bernier. The lack of a ship of their

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1 White, memo, 19 July 1905, Compt. Corr., v. 293.
2 White, memo, 1 August 1904, ibid.
3 Ibid.

own was in fact a constant problem to the police in their operations in the Mackenzie Delta and more particularly in Hudson Bay. Lack of a ship tied them down seriously, and when they chartered one they more often than not came into conflict with the ship's captain--as was the case with Bernier and later with the Baker Lake expedition. It was not until 1928, with the building of the St. Roch and the training of a special crew, that the police finally got a satisfactory ship for Arctic work.

After hectic preparation, the second expedition to Hudson Bay left from Quebec on September 17th 1904. The police contingent consisted of Moodie, Insp. E.A. Pelletier, three N.C.O.'s and six constables.[1] The main task was to consolidate police operations in the bay, to establish new detachments, and to make patrols. Exactly where the new detachments were to be put was left entirely up to Moodie; White told him that the additional police were "to be distributed in such manner as you may deem best in the public interest."[2] These instructions deserve some comment. It is somewhat surprising to find that even after the cruise of the Neptune, the men in charge of the police had so little idea of the geography or the general situation in Hudson Bay that they left as important a matter as the location of police detachments to the officer in charge of the district.

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1 Moodie to White, 25 January 1905, Compt. Corr., v. 319.
2 White to Moodie, 9 September 1904, Compt. Corr., v. 293.

The explanation is that it was not entirely a matter of ignorance or lack of concern. If the chief goal of the police in Hudson Bay was the demonstration to the world of government sovereignty and their own authority, then it was not of vital importance exactly where the police put their posts; it was their "presence" that really mattered. Secondly, leaving decisions of this sort to the officer on the scene was a regular part of police policy. The decisions on where to locate the detachments in the Yukon had almost all been made in the Yukon. Not only were the headquarters in Regina and Ottawa too far away to have an intimate knowledge of the Yukon, they were also too far away in time to respond quickly to changing circumstances or emergencies. The same was true of Hudson Bay, though as time went on, it was true to a progressively lesser extent. It was chiefly a matter of communication; as mail service and later radio service to the Hudson Bay area were introduced, decisions of this sort were made less often in the north.

After a stop at Port Burwell, Moodie and his party arrived at Fullerton on October 16th 1904. During his absence, a patrol had been made to Repulse Bay by boat, and as soon as he arrived he ordered a trip made up Chesterfield Inlet to Baker Lake and back.[1] The purpose of this latter trip was not only to spy out the land, but to let the Eskimos who lived at Baker Lake know of the police, and to try to

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1 Moodie, report for 17 September 1904 to 31 December 1904, Compt. Corr., v. 319.

persuade them to bring meat to Fullerton during the winter for the use of the detachment. The main activity, however, lay in the construction of proper quarters for the detachment. The police, assisted by a carpenter loaned by the whaling ship Era, built a barracks, thirty by fifteen feet, and a storehouse of about the same size.[1] There is an interesting parallel here with the situation on Herschel Island. The police on the island had been dependent for shelter on the generosity of the missionaries and the Pacific Steam Whaling Company. In a somewhat similar way, the police at Fullerton depended on the help of the people they were supposed to be supervising. The loan of the Era's carpenter was of considerable help to Moodie, who in his report noted that "Capt. Comer very kindly permitted him to do his work."[2] Moreover, the detachment's storehouse was constructed from materials furnished from the Era's deckhouse, which Moodie bought when it was dismantled in the spring.[3] If Comer had chosen to be uncooperative, the police would have been placed in a rather difficult position, though the situation was not quite as marked as at Herschel Island. The principle involved, however, was the same.

The rather grandiose plans of the police for extending their control over a wide area were a very long time maturing, and some of the details were never realized. The proposed

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1 R.N.W.M.P. Report 1905, IV, p. 10.
2 Ibid.
3 Ibid.

detachments at Repulse Bay and Cape Wolstenholme were never established, and some of those which exist today were set up only much later. Only one new detachment was founded in Hudson Bay during this early period, at Churchill, which was made the headquarters of "M" Division in 1905, and Fullerton remained for a time the division's only other detachment. The reasons for shifting the centre of police activity in the bay to Churchill are clear. In the first place, there was a Hudson's Bay Company store at Churchill and not one at Fullerton; this meant that the Eskimos gravitated to Churchill, while the police found themselves virtually ignored at the more northerly post. Sometimes the police there saw no one at all for months on end. Furthermore, it was quite possible to get to Churchill from southern Canada from the land--or rather, by river. The police had already made a patrol over the old Hudson's Bay Company route from Norway House to York Factory,[1] and from York Factory to Churchill was not too difficult a trip. Churchill also had the distinction, like Fort McPherson, of being a place where the Indians and the Eskimos came together; the police could thus keep an eye on both races at once.

It seemed to the police and to the government that their operations in Hudson Bay between 1903 and 1905 had been an unqualified success. White wrote an inquirer in

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1 White to Clifford Sifton, 11 August 1903, Compt. Corr., v. 314.

Toronto that Canada's attempt to assert her sovereignty in the eastern Arctic had succeeded even beyond the government's hopes: "We succeeded earlier and easier than we expected."[1] It seems only fair to add that the success was due in part to the virtual lack of opposition. It remained to see how the police would consolidate this success. In the near future their ability to police this new region would be tested, and they would find that exerting real control, as opposed to token sovereignty, was not nearly so easy.

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1 White to H.S. Blake, 23 July 1907, Compt. Lbks., v. 138.

CHAPTER VIII

EXPANDING ACTIVITIES IN THE MACKENZIE DELTA

The history of the Mounted Police in the western Arctic and Mackenzie regions is concerned for several years chiefly with the detachments at Herschel Island and Fort McPherson. Not until 1913 were permanent posts opened at Fort Resolution and Fort Simpson, and these are far enough to the south that they do not fall in the same category, even though all four were in the same administrative division.[1] It was not until 1919 that a detachment was opened at Coppermine River, marking the beginning of a new period of police expansion in the Arctic. It might seem pointless to spend much time in an examination of only two small posts which between 1906 and 1915 had no more than eight men between them.[2] But this is not so, for two reasons. In the first place, the two posts, McPherson and Herschel, were the main settlements in the western Arctic, which meant that they were the hub of an enormous area. Secondly, the police who manned these posts, though few, were not static. Patrols were made every year over a wide expanse of territory, to the south, east, and west, all the way

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1 Fort McPherson and Herschel Island, the two detachments of the Fort McPherson Sub-district, were part of "N" Division (northern Alberta), with headquarters at Athabaska.

2 Information on the location and strength of all detachments was printed annually in the Sessional Papers.

from Dawson to the shores of Hudson Bay. Some of these patrols were for communication, as was the case with the annual Dawson-McPherson mail patrol, which was begun in the winter of 1904-1905.[1] Some were exploratory, and some, such as the two famous ones into the Barren Lands during World War I, were made for the purpose of investigating crimes. The two posts were gathering places for the natives, the whalers, and such occasional visitors as explorers, traders, and the members of the Canadian Arctic Expedition.

In 1906, the police detachment on Herschel Island finally acquired adequate quarters, not through any effort on the part of their superiors, but because one of the children of Rev. C.E. Whittaker, the missionary, had died, and he had left the island. The police took over his house and his supplies.[2] As the officer in charge admitted, "This helped me greatly, as there were no quarters for us on the island, and we were unable to bring sufficient supplies to last us, on the dog sleds."[3] This was another example of how the police, in their efforts to establish themselves in this inhospitable country, benefitted from fortuitous circumstance rather than careful preparation and adequate logistical support.

Herschel Island was still a wintering place for whaling

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1 Perry, R.N.W.M.P. Report 1911, p. 25.
2 Insp. D.M. Howard's report, 30 August 1906, Compt. Corr., v. 309.
3 Ibid.

ships in 1906, though the industry was declining fast. In the winter of 1906-07 only one ship stayed at Herschel,[1] but the activities of the whalers still gave the police cause for concern, as the following episode illustrates:

> [Captain] McGregor complained that a nigger belonging to his crew had left the ship and was living ashore and that he had threatened to shoot him. This man had been in irons for some offence and the captain had foolishly let him go. As . . . he would be left on our hands when the ships pulled out, I had him rounded up and Sergt. Fitzgerald took him aboard and instructed the captain that he would have to look after him.[2]

Incidents such as this tended, however, to be the exception rather than the rule at Herschel. There were a good many days when nothing happened that required the official attention of the police, and these were generally spent in performing all the duties which were essential if the police were to survive in such a hostile environment. All the detachments kept daily records of what was being done. Some of these diaries have survived, and although they are not very interesting, they give a good idea of how the police occupied themselves. A selection from the Herschel Island diary for the autumn of 1906 gives a good idea of what they were like:

> Sept. 29th--Saturday. 24 above, strong wind. Scrubbed out quarters.
> Sept. 30th--Sunday. 24 above. Very strong gale.
> Oct. 1st--Monday. 25 above, fine. Hauling wood to storehouse.
> Oct. 2nd--Tuesday. 27 above, strong wind. Hauling wood to storehouse.
> Oct. 3rd--Wednesday. 24 above, strong wind. Hauling wood to storehouse.

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1 S/Sgt. F.J. Fitzgerald's report, 30 November 1906, Compt. Corr., v. 353.

2 Insp. Howard's report, 17 May 1906, Compt. Corr., v. 309.

Oct. 4th--Thursday. 22 above, foggy. Cleaning up storehouse.
Oct. 5th--Friday. 25 above, fine and calm. Repairing dog harness.
Oct. 6th--Saturday. 21 above, fine and calm. Cleaning stove pipe and scrubbing out quarters.[1]

The diary is much the same as this throughout the year, except that the colder the weather gets, the more emphasis there is on heating. One wonders where the wood came from. Very likely it was driftwood, for there were no trees on Herschel Island, and the police and whalers used large amounts of coal for heating their quarters--coal which, it might be added, cost $32.00 a ton, of which $25.00 represented freight charges.[2]

The dependence of the police detachment and the whole community on supplies from the outside is well shown by the hardships which ensued when the tender supplying the whalers was unable to get to the island in 1906 because of bad ice conditions off Point Barrow. Rather unexpectedly, perhaps, the people who suffered most were the Eskimos employed by the whalers to hunt caribou meat. When the ship failed to arrive, the Eskimos could not be paid for all the work they had done in the previous twelve months. They thus had to go without the sugar, flour, and especially the tea to which by this time they were virtually addicted. The police, who also depended on the supply ship, had to buy coal and "Muck-

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1 Compt. Corr., v. 353.
2 S/Sgt. Fitzgerald's report, 30 November 1906, ibid.

Tuck for dog feed"[1] from the whaling captains.

At Fort McPherson, which was a considerably more cosmopolitan centre, encompassing police, Indians, Eskimos, missionaries, and the Hudson's Bay Company, the routine of the police was much the same as at Herschel. Again, it was mostly a matter of repetitive routine rather than glamorous action. A brief extract from the detachment diary for late September 1906 gives the flavour of life there:

> Sept. 26th, '06--Const. Pritchard cooking, Corpl. and Const. Holmden sawing and cutting wood, and hauling water . . . Went for a walk in the afternoon.
>
> Sept. 27th, '06--Const. Pritchard cooking, Corpl. and Const. Holmden sawing and splitting wood, and hauling water. Went for a walk up the river in the afternoon.
>
> Sept. 28th, '06--Const. Pritchard cooking, Corpl. and Const. Holmden sawing and splitting wood. In afternoon went for a walk up the river.[2]

It all sounds rather idyllic, at least for Insp. Howard. But the morale of the men was subject to fluctuation; four months later, in the middle of the winter, Howard was writing to quite a different effect: "I feel weak and run down. This country is the hardest I have yet been in during my seventeen years' service." Fort McPherson, he said, was a much more unpleasant place than any part of the Yukon, "where in nearly every place you were surrounded by the comforts of civilization to counteract the depressing effects of the

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1 Fitzgerald discusses the situation in detail in his report of 30 November 1906, Compt. Corr., v. 353.

2 Insp. D.M. Howard, ibid.

climate."[1]

But little by little, events began to intrude upon the routine of the police in the Mackenzie Delta. In the summer of 1906 it was reported that a certain "A. McStephanson" had arrived at Fort McPherson on board the Hudson's Bay Company steamer Wrigley. This gentleman was not Scottish; the notation is a misreading of "a Mr. Stephanson," who was in fact Vilhjalmur Stefansson. In 1906 Stefansson was paying the first of several visits to the Arctic. During his years in the Arctic he was to have frequent contacts with the police, and these were not always amicable. From the very first the police discovered that Stefansson was a man who had his own way of doing things, and that he was extremely stubborn and just as iron-willed as they, if not more so. He had come to Fort McPherson intending to join the Duchess of Bedford, the ship carrying the Anglo-American Arctic Expedition. The ship had not arrived (it was eventually wrecked off Flaxman Island, aborting the expedition), so Stefansson spent a month as a guest of the police at Fort McPherson, before setting out for Herschel Island. The police do not seem to have welcomed their guest; supplies were not plentiful that year, and Stefansson had, as the report put it, come "down the Mackenzie with nothing in the way of supplies or money, and the Police have been looking

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1 Insp. Howard's report, 18 January 1907, Compt. Corr., v. 353.

after him since last July."[1] Because the expedition had fallen through, Stefansson was given the opportunity of living with the Eskimos during the winter of 1906-07, an experience which enabled him to gain an insight into their way of life surpassed by no other white man at that time. His insights did not always agree with the opinions of others, and Stefansson's entire career was marked by a series of quarrels with all sorts of people, especially with civil servants. On occasion he found himself at odds with the R.N.W.M.P., and the remains of these differences may be found in his books and in the police records.

Stefansson, the great propagandist for the Canadian Arctic, believed that it could be, in the words of the title of his famous book, a "friendly" place, if his rules for living there were carefully followed. His whole life was dedicated to the proposition that, as his biographer put it, "The Arctic Sea is not at the end of the earth, but must . . . become in time a polar Mediterranean."[2] People who did not agree with this view of the Arctic were often dealt with scornfully. There is no doubt that although there were members of the police who were eager for northern service--Fitzgerald is a good example--there were others who leaned more towards the end-of-the-earth theory. And no member of the police in the north welcomed the possibility

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1 Insp. Howard's report, 28 August 1906, Compt. Corr., v. 353.

2 D.M. LeBourdais, Stefansson, Ambassador of the North, (Montreal, 1963), p. 10.

of an influx of amateurs wishing to live off the land; such an influx could only bring the police the task of rescuing the unlucky and the foolish. But it seemed to Stefansson that the whites were always exaggerating the difficulties of life in the north--that starvation was not always close at hand, and if it was, it was because people insisted on eating white man's food--tea, coffee, sugar--instead of living off the land. He bitterly resented the fact that the Eskimos had become so used to these foods that when they ran short of them the cry of starvation was raised. In fact, he believed, the Eskimo would be perfectly all right if he continued to eat his traditional foods of fish, seal, and caribou, since these never gave out, and abandoned the white man's ways.[1] The whalers received the greatest share of Stefansson's wrath, since these were the original corrupters of the Eskimos, but the police also came in for a share of criticism.

A good example of Stefansson's view of the errors of the police is provided by his account of the situation at Herschel Island in the summer of 1908. The whaling industry was dying; only one ship, the Karluk, had wintered at the island, and supplies were running low. The Eskimos began to fear starvation:

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1 Eskimos starved often enough before the white man came. Stefansson says little about this.

> It is true, as experience has since shown, that in the absence of whalers the Eskimos of the Mackenzie River are able to live perfectly well on the game and fish of the country; but they did not think so themselves in the summer of 1908, any more than those of us used to high living think we can get along on the simple fare of the poor. The mounted police agreed with them in this, and every one therefore considered that they were facing a critical winter. . . . My opinion agreed with that of no one else with regard to the prospects for the coming winter. It seemed to me the condition was nowise serious. I had lived with the Eskimos the year before and had seen what an abundance of fish there was in the eastern channels of the Mackenzie delta, and I knew that fish and caribou were also plentiful farther east. But the whalers had never seen Eskimo living anywhere except around whaling ships and dependent on them; neither had the mounted police, and, consequently, it seemed to all of them that the district was facing a period of starvation. 1

This was not, of course, a matter of direct conflict between Stefansson and the police. It was more a matter of a different view of the natives and their situation, and what should be done to remedy it.

Where the police did come into direct conflict with Stefansson was over the question of their responsibility for his safety. The police felt, not unreasonably, that it was part of their duty to see as far as possible that no white man starved or otherwise got into difficulties (or created difficulties) in their particular area. If misfortune befell an explorer, the police might be blamed for it, or at the least would be expected to exert themselves to get him out of danger. The police had learned from

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1 V. Stefansson, My Life with the Eskimo, (New York, 1913), pp. 40-41.

their experience in the Yukon that the best way to avoid having to take care of indigents was not to let people into the country without ample supplies. But when they tried a similar method of prevention on Stefansson they ran into trouble. The clash was over the matter of matches, and in this incident is clearly shown the conflict between Stefansson's view of life in the Arctic, and the police or official view.

The quarrel, which took place during Stefansson's second trip north, may be described briefly. Stefansson and his companion, Dr. R.M. Anderson, found themselves in the summer of 1908 faced with the prospect of spending the next winter with very few supplies, since no ship had managed to get to the Beaufort Sea that season. This prospect did not worry Stefansson; in fact he welcomed it, because it gave him another opportunity to demonstrate that one could live happily in the Arctic, in close association with the Eskimos and Indians, without any of the white man's goods at all. There was, however, one article of manufacture that Stefansson considered essential--matches; and, unfortunately, he had run short of them. He therefore asked S/Sgt. Fitzgerald, then commanding the R.N.W.M.P. post on Herschel Island, to give, lend, or sell him a quantity of matches. Stefansson describes in his book what the reply was. Fitzgerald refused to give him any matches, and told him "that if I would discharge all my Eskimo . . . and if Dr. Anderson and I would live for the

winter in a small house which he would assign to us near the barracks, then he would supply us with not only matches, but also everything else that we needed to eat."[1] According to Stefansson, and there is no reason to believe that he was not telling the truth, Fitzgerald admitted that his refusal was simply a way of getting Stefansson to leave that part of the country. Fitzgerald thought that Stefansson's wish to live off the country in the native manner was simple foolishness. He believed "that we were now destitute and likely to die of starvation, and it was his duty to supply us, in a way that suited him, with sufficient food to keep us from actual want."[2] Fitzgerald believed that if he gave Stefansson the matches he would only go off on some mad venture and either kill himself or become a charge on the natives, and Fitzgerald did not wish to be responsible for either result. "He further informed me that the laws of the Yukon gave him a right to ship Dr. Anderson and me out of the country because we had no visible means of support. But, he said, seeing he could accomplish the same result by refusing us matches, he would prefer that method, and let us go west to Point Barrow for them . . . where we should be in no danger of starving."[3] And that is what they had to do,

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1 Stefansson, op. cit., p. 41.
2 Ibid.
3 Ibid., p. 42.

much to Stefansson's rage.

None of this seems to cast a very favourable light upon either the generosity of the police or their intelligent appraisal of conditions of life in the Arctic. And the crowning example of the triumph of Stefansson's ideas was yet to come--the contrast between his own extremely successful journeys during the first World War and Fitzgerald's unfortunate death on patrol between Fort McPherson and Dawson in 1911, an event which proved to Stefansson that he knew what he was doing, and the police did not.

The question of the ill-fated Fitzgerald patrol will be discussed later, since it belongs to a later period of police involvement in the Arctic. With reference to the unpleasantness between the police and Stefansson which took place in 1908, can anything be said in favour of the police, or is Stefansson's interpretation of the events to be accepted? In the first place it should be said in fairness to the police that over a period of years they did many favours for Stefansson, even if on this occasion they would not give him the coveted matches. The fact that they had put him up for over a month in the summer of 1906, when he arrived without money or supplies, has already been mentioned. Stefansson did not see fit to relate this incident in his account of the period. Since he had at that time had no opportunity to learn the Eskimos' secrets of survival, he would likely have been in difficulty had the police not voluntarily assisted him.

In the next year, 1907, Stefansson had made a quick journey back to civilization--the telegraph station at Eagle, Alaska--to tell the world that, despite the sinking of the Duchess of Bedford, he and the ship's crew were not dead. The police at Herschel Island loaned him their whaleboat, in which he went first to Fort McPherson and then up the Rat River as far as the portage leading to the Bell. LeBourdais says "he hired two Indians to help carry his effects across the 80-mile portage to Bell River."[1] The confidential police report on the episode, however, suggests that even here the police were of more use than Stefansson or his biographer gave them credit for being. Inspector A.M. Jarvis reported from Herschel that he had sent Stefansson "with our whale boat as far as Rat River on the Peel and got two natives to help him track up the Rat to Rampart House . . ."[2]

If the police were feeding Stefansson, lending him their whaleboat, and hiring Indians to carry his gear, it seems only natural, especially given the precedents of the Yukon, that they should begin to feel it their privilege and responsibility to tell him what to do, both for his own good and because it was part of their duty to do so. Stefansson had eaten police food and borrowed their equipment;

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1 LeBourdais, op. cit., p. 21.
2 Jarvis to Perry, 4 August 1907, Compt. Corr., v. 353.

they had helped him out of the country and he had come back, unrepentant, for more. It was part of the paternalistic nature of police methods in the Yukon and in the Arctic that they sought to give advice, and were offended when that advice was rejected. This was the genesis of the quarrel over the matches. Fitzgerald's ill-tempered report of late 1908 reveals the attitude of the police and throws a light--admittedly a one-sided one--on Stefansson which certainly does not appear in his books:

> Such men as Stefensson claim that they can live on the country, they can by someone else supplying the food. All these people are a drain on our supplies, it is impossible to refuse a white man if he is short of food. . . . Suggest that if there are any white men coming in the country, that they will not be allowed down the river unless they have at least one year's supply of provisions. [1]

None of the above, however, could be construed to mean that Stefansson was wrong in his theories about Arctic survival or his ideas on what was good for the natives. In general it is difficult to fault his reasoning or his common-sense approach to problems. He was right more often than wrong. What is clear, however, is that he did not give sufficient credit to those who assisted him in his exploration and discoveries. He seems to have depended on outside agencies--in this case, the police--rather more than he liked to admit in his writings. This is not to downgrade Stefansson's achievements, but simply to emphasize that the police at

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1 S/Sgt. Fitzgerald's report, 4 December 1908, Compt. Corr., v. 372.

times played a more reasonable and useful part in them than has generally been admitted or recognized.

Over a period of several years, the activities of the police in the western Arctic gradually broadened. The main duty of the police, as set forth in the orders issued to the men at the northern detachments, continued, however, to be of a regulatory and supervisory nature. In the summer of 1907, when Inspector A.M. Jarvis took over command of the Mackenzie River District from Inspector D.M. Howard, the orders issued to him show how the police assessed the situation in the area at that time. Although the whaling industry was fading rapidly into insignificance, the police were ordered to focus their attention on it almost to the exclusion of other duties. For this reason the headquarters of the district were to be at Herschel Island rather than Fort McPherson. A detailed report was to be made of every aspect of the operations of the whaling fleet. Above all, the Eskimos were to be protected from the whalers: "Your duty is to see that intoxicating liquors are not given to the Esquimeau . . . [Any ship doing so is] liable to be seized and sold. It is also your duty to protect the natives from abuse by the whaling crews . . . forcible abduction of native women must be rigorously dealt with."[1] Commissioner

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1 Perry to Jarvis, 7 May 1907, Compt. Corr., v. 353.

Perry was letting his imagination run away with him to some extent; cases of forcible abduction of Eskimo women were unknown in the western Arctic. As travellers, missionaries, and police had observed, the women seemed to welcome a temporary liaison with a white man. It is significant to note, though, the emphasis which was placed on the activities of the whalers as late as 1907.

To uphold the law Jarvis was given, under the authority of the Northwest Territories Amendment Act of 1905, the power of two Justices of the Peace, which empowered him to try all but the most serious crimes which might arise in his district.[1] To look ahead briefly: this would seem to have been a good idea, but in fact it had a serious drawback. When minor crimes such as selling liquor to the natives or trying to evade payment of customs duties were committed, the officer in charge of the district could dispense speedy justice, which generally proved a useful lesson to innocent and guilty alike. But when a serious crime such as murder was committed, the commanding officer of the district could not try the case, because he did not have the authority to do so. This meant that in cases of serious crime, the police had to transport the accused and all the witnesses to Edmonton, or bring the entire court north, or else ignore the case altogether.[2]

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1 Ibid.

2 Constantine had recommended in 1903 that a stipendiary magistrate be sent to the region; he would have had the authority to try serious cases. This was not done.

An example of how this situation tended to be detrimental to the just administration of the law in the Arctic occurred in 1907. An Indian woman at Fort McPherson complained to the police that she had been raped by a white man. Because the charge of rape was beyond the legal competence of the police to try, Insp. Howard had to forward the particulars of the case to Commissioner Perry in Regina, asking him if he thought that the evidence was strong enough to warrant the expense of bringing everyone concerned south for a trial. Perry conferred with Comptroller White, who asked the opinion of the Department of Justice, and after much letter-writing and delay the decision was made that the evidence was insufficient for a trial.[1] This decision was probably the most practical one, and might have been the best from a legal standpoint. It does not seem to have given full justice to the plaintiff, however, and to base such a decision on financial considerations is not what one might have expected either from the police or from the Department of Justice. It was, of course, another example of police pragmatism.

This sort of incident was not common in the Mackenzie Delta in this period, for crime there did not often rise above petty offences, especially those connected with liquor. There were, occasionally, cases which might be termed "routine";

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1 The correspondence relating to the case is in Compt. Corr., v. 336.

that is, instances of crimes committed which the police investigated in much the same way as they would have anywhere else in Canada. Yet the peculiar conditions of police work in the Arctic could not help but give even these cases a special character. A good example is the case of Charlie Klengenberg. Klengenberg (or Klinkinberg, as his name was sometimes spelled), was a scoundrelly Dane, whom Stefansson once described as being much like the captain in Jack London's Sea Wolf.[1] He was captain of the Olga, a ship engaged in trading in the Beaufort Sea. In 1905 there was a series of incidents on board the Olga in which the chief engineer had been shot, for mutiny according to Klengenberg, one member of the crew had died, and two more had drowned.[2] When the Olga arrived at Herschel Island in the autumn of 1905, the police ordered Klengenberg to stay on the island until a full investigation had been made. He disobeyed this order and escaped in a small boat with his Eskimo family, whereupon the remaining members of the Olga's crew accused Klengenberg of criminal responsibility for all of the deaths.

The police had been put in exactly the awkward position that had been foreseen when the Mackenzie River posts were first established. They had clear-cut evidence of a very nasty crime, but could do little by way of catching the

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1 V. Stefansson, Discovery, (New York, 1964), p. 73.
2 The story is told in Stefansson, ibid.

suspect for want of a ship of their own. The best they could do was to wait and beg a ride on a whaling ship going in what they hoped was the right direction. Thus in the summer of 1907 (nearly two years later), Insp. A.M. Jarvis travelled on board the Beluga more than fifteen hundred miles to the north and east of Herschel Island in an attempt to find Klengenberg or learn of his whereabouts. In doing so, he set a "farthest north" record for a member of the R.N.W.M.P. to that time: "I have satisfied myself that Capt. Klengenberg is not in these waters . . . We went as far north as Lat. 72.05 N., Long. 126.30 W., in sight of Prince Albert Land. Had Klengenberg been up there, Capt. Porter would have gone in there for me and we would have brought him out."[1] Of course Jarvis had virtually no control over this voyage. He was on board only through the courtesy of the captain, and could only hope to sight his quarry wherever the captain of the Beluga decided to go.

Later that year, Klengenberg came to Herschel Island voluntarily. A hearing into the charges against him was held, but for lack of any convincing testimony or evidence, the case was dropped and he was allowed to go free. The whole incident did not reflect much credit on the effective-

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1 Jarvis to Perry, 24 August 1907, Compt. Corr., v. 353. There is a copying error here; Jarvis must have meant 116.30 W., which would have put him off the Prince Albert peninsula of Victoria Island.

ness of the police presence and authority in the area, and it convinced Jarvis that the police would have to expand their operations if they hoped to prevent men like Klengenberg from exploiting the natives to the east of Herschel Island. Jarvis believed, probably correctly, that Klengenberg intended to head east with liquor to trade with the natives of Victoria Island, around Minto Inlet. A detachment was needed there, or at Baillie Island; otherwise police authority meant nothing once one left the Mackenzie Delta. His request for a new post was refused by the Commissioner on the grounds that the police were not in a position to send a ship to the Arctic, and thus a post east of the Mackenzie was impossible.[1]

In the same letter, Jarvis commented that Klengenberg was not the only unsavoury character who was suspected of trading liquor with the natives. His successor as captain of the Olga, a man named Mogg, was equally undesireable--"a very low type of Englishman," Jarvis called him, "who has been a number of years in the United States, acquiring the American manner and conceit."[2] This description brings to mind the anti-American sentiments which were expressed from time to time by the police who served in the Yukon, and shows that this attitude of mind persisted into the new

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1 Perry to Jarvis, 28 January 1908, Compt. Corr., v. 353.
2 Jarvis to Perry, 28 January 1908, ibid.

century and into a new part of the country.

A requirement for a government which wishes to exercise sovereignty over a territory is that it know as much about it as possible, and the western Arctic was no exception to this rule. One of the important duties of the police was to supply information to the government on crime and on a great variety of other subjects. The annual reports which the government received from the Yukon were very comprehensive, rather like the letters written by a colonial governor to his superiors, which analogy, in fact, is not too far from the truth. Reports from the Mackenzie Delta and Hudson Bay were equally comprehensive, though on a smaller scale. The activities of the whalers were carefully followed by the police for as many years as the trade continued to function. When there was a brief flurry of mining activity in the area, they investigated and reported on it, especially when they sensed a need for government control: "There are at present three or four miners working up the Black River between Norman and Wrigley, and they are reported to have found fair pay, with what truth I do not know . . . It might be well to have the officers in the district authorized to issue mining licenses."[1] Further information was provided about the activities of miners on the Black River in the annual report for 1907. Insp. Howard reported that the miners "came out on the same boat with

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1 Insp. Howard's report, 16 July 1907, Compt. Corr., v. 353.

me and I had a long talk with the leader, an American from Kansas City."[1] The miners had been trying their luck in the area between Fort Norman and Wrigley for two years since 1905, but had not been very successful--in fact they had found no gold at all. "The leader expressed his intention of coming back again" wrote Howard, "and I fancy he will do so, as he is a man of independent means."[2]

At the same time, some mining had begun in a small way in the extreme north of the Yukon. A "Jap named Jujiro Wada" had staked three placer mining claims "on a tributary of a river flowing into the Arctic Ocean about opposite Herschell Island."[3] Since regulations required that all mining done in the Yukon be reported to Dawson at the end of each year, and since it was unfair to ask a man to travel from the vicinity of the British Mountains to Dawson just to file a report, the police were asked by the Department of the Interior to act as mining recorders for the northern part of the Territory. Although these attempts at mining proved to be short-lived and unsuccessful, their significance, as far as the police were concerned, was to widen their authority and sphere of activity, enabling them to send out more and more information on the district.

One of the constantly recurrent themes from this period of police activity in the western Arctic is their wish to

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1 R.N.W.M.P. Report 1907, K, p. 114.
2 Ibid.
3 P.G. Keyes, Secretary, Department of the Interior, to White, 30 June 1908, Compt. Corr., v. 372.

see their authority extended over a wider geographical area. There was much more to this desire than the simple drive towards "empire-building" which is so much a part of civil service activity; it was a realization on the part of the police that they could not properly control any of the populated part of the Arctic unless they controlled a large part of it. In his annual report for 1907, Insp. Howard noted that the authority of the police along the Arctic coast really extended only from Herschel Island to the mouth of the Mackenzie.[1] He might have added that the activities of whites had by then extended as far east as the entrance to the Dolphin and Union Straits, at the tip of Wollaston Peninsula. Thus the police were exerting effective jurisdiction over only a fraction--although the central fraction--of the whole region. Howard proposed the establishment of a detachment at Baillie Island, a location which would be perfectly suited for the exercise of police authority as far to the east and north as any white man was likely to go for some time. But in describing the requirements for such a post, Howard undermined his case. "A post at Bailey Island" he wrote, "could not be rationed from Macpherson as the distance is too great, and the coast a dangerous one, the only way would be by ship from the outside which could ration Herschel Island at the same time."[2] This was the great difficulty; the coast was

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1 R.N.W.M.P. Report 1907, K, p. 112.
2 Ibid., pp. 112-113.

too dangerous to supply such a post by whaleboat, and the police could not afford a ship of their own. Nor were these the only problems: "Portable buildings would have to be sent in . . . as there are no trees and no buildings . . . coal would also have to be sent in for fuel as at Herschel Island."[1] In short, given the resources of material and money available to the police in 1907, it was impossible for them to establish a post at as isolated a place as Baillie Island, no matter how desireable from the police point of view such a detachment might be.

It should be noted that as late as 1907 the police were not very firmly established even in their two original locations of Herschel Island and Fort McPherson. The trouble at Fort McPherson was lack of proper accommodations. In the summer the police lived in tents, which gave some variety to their routine. But in the winter they had to fall back on a building rented from the Hudson's Bay Company, which was "in a very bad state of repair, and liable to come down at any time . . . has been up a long time, since 1872 or 1873."[2] The problem at Herschel Island was one of supply. Although there was no shortage of supplies at McPherson, everything for Herschel had to be carried 180 miles in an open whaleboat, subject to spoilage or loss. The Hudson's Bay Company offered to carry freight to the island, but they asked what the police considered to be

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1 R.N.W.M.P. Report 1907, K, p. 113.
2 Ibid.

excessively high rates, and they would assume no responsibility for loss or accident. Thus the police continued to supply the detachment as best they could, by whaleboat from McPherson, and by purchasing coal and other goods from passing whalers when the opportunity to do so presented itself. Eventually the difficulty at Fort McPherson was solved by the cooperation of the Hudson's Bay Company, which in 1909 converted a large storehouse into a barracks and guard room for the use of the police. The rent was reasonable--twenty dollars per month--and the quarters proved satisfactory for the needs of the men.[1] The problem of supplying Herschel Island was never satisfactorily solved during the years the post was in operation.

Although police work in the Mackenzie Delta did not, in the period before World War I, have the extreme busyness which had been so characteristic of the Yukon period, it was not always prosaic. Extracts have been given from the detachment diaries to show the monotony of the routine followed by the police. But they were not always at the detachments. Regular patrols had to be made between the two detachments for mail and supplies, an annual patrol was made from Dawson to Fort McPherson with the winter mail, and special patrols for investigation or exploration were made as circumstances required. On patrol the duties of the police sometimes developed high drama of the type which

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1 Correspondence on the subject between Perry and C.C. Chipman, Commissioner of the Hudson's Bay Company, is in Compt. Corr., v. 372.

helped make their reputation in the Yukon, and has been the subject of popular literature ever since. Yet police activities in the Arctic failed to achieve the same prominence, at least at this time. This was partly because they were on a smaller scale, and partly, no doubt, because there were no journalists in the area. The police themselves felt that the hardships of northern service were not receiving sufficient publicity. In April 1908 Perry sent White an extract from Insp. Jarvis' diary for the previous winter, with the suggestion that he show it to the Prime Minister, so that some public reference might be made to the work of the police in the Arctic. The extract enclosed was for November 23rd 1907, during a sledge journey between Herschel Island and Fort McPherson:

> Strong S.W. wind, 15 below zero. Left camp at 6 a.m., made camp for lunch and went on close to King's Point [about fifty miles east of Herschel Island] were [sic] we encountered open water, and got on moving ice, and had to return about 7 miles. Found that . . . Const. Pearson F.S. had both hands and feet frozen, and had taken a bad chill. After a great deal of difficulty we got ashore after dark and had to make camp on ice. Very little wood to be found here. The stove had no legs, and we found in the morning that it had gone through the ice level with the top. A miserable camp. Const. Pearson took a second chill during the night, dosed him with brandy. [1]

The parallel with the police falling into the Yukon River while on mail patrol, mentioned earlier, will be readily apparent. In each case it was the hardship involved, the atmosphere of heroism and heroics, which made the police so proud of themselves. But the student of the Stefansson method

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1 Compt. Corr., v. 353.

of Arctic travel may wonder what the police were doing with a stove--presumably an iron one--at all. Why not an oil lamp, which could be placed, Eskimo-fashion, so that it would heat the dwelling without melting the floor? In this period, "making camp" often meant pitching a tent. Stefansson would have asked why the police did not build an igloo, since the igloo was always snug and warm. The answer is that at this stage many of the police did not know how to build igloos, or were not in a place where the snow was suitable for one, and were therefore compelled to suffer the discomforts of those Arctic travellers who were well supplied with courage but deficient in the special technical skills necessary for proper adaptation to the environment. Furthermore, the police, unlike the nomadic Eskimo, had a specific goal and a set timetable, and could not always afford the time necessary to build an igloo or to hunt game. The Eskimos, and Stefansson, could spend all the time they pleased looking for food and shelter; the police could rarely afford to do so. Only later did the police become more sophisticated and more flexible in their approach to Arctic survival. Then incidents of the sort related above occurred less often, as will be seen when the great patrols of the war years are examined.

Even when they were not on patrol the police sometimes found survival a challenge. Nearly everyone who served at Herschel Island succumbed at one time or another to what a later generation called the "blues." Insp. Howard's com-

plaint about Fort McPherson in 1907 was quoted earlier in this chapter. S/Sgt. Fitzgerald, who was not a whiner by nature, described life on Herschel Island in equally gloomy terms two years later:

> When there are no ships wintering at Herschel Island I think it is one of the most lonesome places in the north. There is no place one can go, except to visit a few hungry natives . . . There is no white man to visit closer than 180 miles. [1]

The climate gave the men an excuse for complaint, for at times it was spectacularly unpleasant. Three days before Christmas 1908 the temperature at Herschel dropped seventy degrees in five hours--from twenty-two above at 7 p.m. to fifty-two below at midnight--in a howling blizzard. Ten days later the "worst blizzard ever known in this country" blew every chimney on the island into the Beaufort Sea.[2]

All these tribulations and heroics were noted by Commissioner Perry in a rather stuffy paragraph which appeared in the annual report for 1907:

> I might observe that whether bringing relief to isolated settlers in bitter cold and over the deep snow of the open plains, carrying mail to the distant Hudson's Bay posts, to the Arctic Seas, or to detachments interned in northern British Columbia, or hurrying to the relief of unfortunate persons in remote parts, our men do not fail us. They undertake the work with cheerfulness and carry it out indifferent to difficulties and hardships. [3]

The last part, about cheerfulness and indifference to hardships, seems a bit much for Perry to claim after he had read

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1 S/Sgt. Fitzgerald's report, 16 May 1909, Compt. Corr., v. 372.

2 Ibid.

3 R.N.W.M.P. Report 1907, p. 11.

so many complaints and gloomy reports from the Arctic, a few of which have been noted here. The use of the word "interned" is a nice, though unwitting, touch. It is interesting to note the difference between the realities of Arctic service and the version which was presented to the public in the published reports.

These digressions aside, what of the primary task of the police--the assertion of Canadian sovereignty and the protection of the natives? The duties performed by the police in 1909 were much the same as in 1903, when the two posts were established: keeping an eye on the whalers, collecting customs duties from traders, keeping liquor away from the Indians and Eskimos, investigating complaints, and making patrols and reports.

The whaling industry was not quite dead, for in the winter of 1908-09 two ships hunting whales were reported to be in the western Arctic--the Karluk, at Herschel Island, and the Olga, at Prince Albert Land. The Karluk had taken four whales, yielding about five thousand pounds of bone, and the Olga had caught none.[1] The whalers gave little trouble, except for the occasional incident; in December 1909 the police tried and convicted the second officer of the Karluk on a charge of giving liquor to an Eskimo woman, and fined him a hundred dollars. "This had the desired effect" reported the officer in charge, "and a like offence

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1 S/Sgt. Fitzgerald's report, 10 February 1909, Compt. Corr., v. 372.

has not been committed."[1] The police, in fact, were grateful for the presence of the whalers, for when a ship wintered at Herschel Island they had someone to talk to other than "hungry natives," as Fitzgerald put it. Insp. G.L. Jennings referred in one of his reports to the captain and crew of the Karluk as having made the winter of 1909-1910 pass "more pleasantly and apparently more quickly" than it otherwise would have done. He thanked them for their "strict observance of the Canadian law, and . . . kindness and liberality to the natives."[2] He was, however, realistic enough to admit of the whalers that "if there were no peace officers here they would quickly return to the wild times of several years ago."[3]

At this point, with the whaling industry on its last legs, the federal government decided to assert its authority more stongly over it, using the police as agents of a policy of stricter regulation. In December 1909 the Superintendent of Fisheries wrote to Comptroller White, saying that he understood that a good many American whalers were operating off Herschel Island, and asking if the police there would help the Department of Marine and Fisheries by collecting the fifty dollar whaling fee[4] from the captains. White replied that the police would be glad to assist, but

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1 Insp. G.L. Jennings' report, 16 February 1910, Compt. Corr., v. 383.
2 Insp. Jennings' report, 15 July 1910, ibid.
3 Insp. Jennings' report, 16 February 1910, ibid.
4 Prescribed by the 1906 amendments to the Fisheries Act.

that there were now very few vessels; furthermore, the ships did not hunt whales anywhere near Canadian territory. He asked that he be informed of the extent of Canadian territorial waters, so that he would know whether he had the right to require Americans to buy whaling licences. The question of territorial waters was one the government found embarrassing, for then as now there was no international consensus as to exactly how far Canada might exert her authority over the waters of the Arctic Ocean. When it was admitted that Canada had no right to ask whaling captains to buy licences unless whales were being killed within three miles of shore[1]--which was almost never done--the whole matter was quietly shelved. It was too late anyway, for the whaling industry in that part of the world was practically at an end, but the incident did not reflect well on the government's alacrity in confronting the problem, nor on its wisdom in assessing the requirements for a solution to it.[2]

The police were of course well aware of the sovereignty question. The reports and correspondence from the Mackenzie River posts are full of comments and suggestions on how Canada's authority in the area might be made both more apparent and more real. Ideas put forward by the police

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1 This was not the case in Hudson Bay, the whole of which Canada claimed as territorial waters; there, licences were required no matter how far from shore the fishing was done.

2 Correspondence on this matter between White and R.N. Venning, Superintendent of Fisheries, from 18 December 1909, to 1 February 1910, is in Compt. Corr., v. 384.

ranged from supplying the natives with flags to appointing judges in the region to bring Canadian law to them. One of their more perceptive suggestions concerned trade. The idea was that Canadians ought to take advantage of the possibilities of Arctic trade, for if they did not seize the opportunity, Americans would, and the trade would pass into alien hands:

> With a good class of trade goods . . . having no duty on these goods, selling or trading at a reasonable profit, the whole trade of our Arctic coast could easily be secured . . . but a matter of a very few years before American trading concerns open stations at Herschel Id., Kittigazuit and Baillie Id. If a Canadian firm was established first there would be no opposition. [1]

The establishment of trading posts would also help the police in two ways; it would provide an easy source of supplies for the detachments, and it would ease the problem of collecting customs.

The police were quick to assert and to extend this sovereignty--that is, their own authority, which in this period in the Arctic was virtually the same thing--as much as they could with their limited resources. This was the impetus behind a long patrol which was made in 1910 from Fort McPherson to Herschel Island by way of the Porcupine River and the extreme northern interior of the Yukon Territory. The police officer commanding the district, Insp.

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1 Insp. Jennings' report, 16 February 1910, Compt. Corr., v. 383.

G.L. Jennings, had heard rumours "that traders had come among the natives bringing goods from Alaska, duty unpaid, and also intoxicants; that many individual miners were located in the district . . ."[1] It should be emphasized that this was entirely the idea of the local officer, who on his own initiative made a patrol of more than four hundred miles through virtually unknown country in order to, as he said, "gain as accurate knowledge as possible on such a trip of the topography and general conditions of that country . . . visit as many miners and traders as could be reached . . ."[2] It was this sort of initiative which was one of the greatest contributions of the police to the establishment of effective Canadian control in the Arctic.

Most of the activity commented upon by Insp. Jennings was, in fact, transitory. The mining carried out in the country west of Fort McPherson, though it brought white men to the Bell River almost for the first time, was not lively enough to be called a "boom," and did not last long. "Several camps of miners" had prospected along the Bell River between 1908 and 1910, lured into the country by rumours of a big strike, but as the police reported, they found nothing, and soon left.[3] In 1910, the Mackenzie Delta did not seem any

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1 R.N.W.M.P. Report 1910, N, p. 170.
2 Ibid.
3 Sgt. E.A. Selig's report, 31 January 1909, Compt. Corr., v. 372.

more ready to be "opened up" to settlement or exploitation than it had seven years earlier; on the contrary, commercial activity in the area was declining as one by one the whaling ships left for good, to be replaced eventually by coastal traders. The police stopped asking that a new detachment be set up at Baillie Island; in 1910 Insp. Jennings admitted that there was now no need for one, "nor is it likely there will be for many years, not until more traders get into that district."[1] The police were concerned about what would happen to the Eskimos now that the whaling was dying. Insp. Jennings, perhaps borrowing the idea from Stefansson, suggested that a herd of reindeer be purchased for the Eskimos of Mackenzie Bay.[2] This attempt to find a replacement for the whalers in the economic life of the area had, however, to wait for a later era.

One of the important aspects of police work in the Mackenzie Delta, as in the Yukon, was what the military refers to as "aid to the civil power"--that is, doing odd jobs for the government. Duties associated with the post office occupied a minor but significant portion of the energy of the police. There were three mail deliveries to Fort McPherson each year; one in the summer by way of the Hudson's Bay Company steamer, one in the early winter by the police patrol from Dawson, and one in mid-winter from Edmonton via

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1 R.N.W.M.P. Report 1910, O, p. 184.
2 Commissioner Perry's report, R.N.W.M.P. Report 1910, p. 24.

Dawson.[1] Mail from the outside was important to the police and the whalers, who depended on it for news of home. Mail was also important to the Eskimos, for the police, in addition to handling "outside" mail, also carried on what they called a "rural delivery system":

> Our patrol leaving Herschel Island took 184 letters, exclusive of official correspondence. 8 of them were written by Eskimo to other Eskimo along the coast, to be delivered by our rural delivery system. Some 50 letters came from the West coast as far as Flaxman's Isld., a sled having been sent to Herschel with them, as there is no winter mail in that part of Alaska, The balance is from the crew of the ship wintering at Herschel. A few letters were sent from the eastward . . . [2]

The service provided by the police in carrying mail from one part of the western Arctic to another, must have provided a slight but definite cohesive force in the area; that is, it made the area a sort of community centred on the two police posts, which became clearing-houses for written news and communication. It also, no doubt, enabled the police to keep a close check on everything that was going on in their domain.

The Customs Department was also represented by the police in the Mackenzie Delta, and although there was really very little collection to be done, the duties were carred out conscientiously. It was impossible to collect customs from a trading ship which made an effort to avoid the police,

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1 Insp. Jarvis' report, 12 February 1908, Compt. Corr., v. 353.

2 Insp. Jennings' report, 16 February 1910, Compt. Corr., v. 383.

or argued that its supplies had been disposed of as gifts. If the police crossed the path of traders while on patrol, then duty was extracted from them, but the process was at best haphazard. Nevertheless, in most years at least a token sum was collected. In 1909 just under $400 was paid to the police,[1] in 1908 none,[2] and in 1911 about $300,[3] to give three representative examples. The money involved was very little, but the principle was important. Making ship's captains pay duty was a good practical demonstration of sovereignty, even when carried out on only a small scale--and perhaps that was all that was wanted.

The service rendered by the police to the Department of Indian Affairs was an important part of their duties in the Arctic. The police reports concerning the Indians and Eskimos of this region were generally complacent in tone; one from 1910 is typical: ". . . any complaints brought to our notice have been fully investigated. The natives have been protected on the score of morality and in regard to intoxicants."[4] This statement was true, but there was much more to the situation than that. The relations between the police and the native peoples was so integral a part of their service on the northern frontier that a chapter will be devoted to it later.

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1 Insp. Jennings' report, 16 February 1910, Compt. Corr., v. 383.
2 Insp. Jennings' report, 7 August 1909, ibid.
3 Cpl. J. Somers' report, 7 July 1911, R.N.W.M.P. Report 1911, O, p. 165.
4 Insp. Jennings' report, 16 February 1910, Compt. Corr., v. 383.

Some miscellaneous aid to government agencies also took place. For example, in July 1912 two men working for the Canadian party of the International Boundary Survey, which was marking the boundary between Alaska and the Yukon, stayed for a short while with the police at Herschel Island. The purpose of the visit was to erect a signal for triangulation. However, the weather was so foul that contact with the main party on the mainland to the west could not be established. The police furnished the visitors with rations and sent a bill for them to the Chief Astronomer.[1] The laws regarding the conservation of game were also enforced, and this occasioned the seizure of beaver pelts trapped out of season.[2] This activity hardly counts as aid to the civil power, however, for it was in the regular line of police duty.

The role of the police in establishing government control in the Mackenzie Delta country in their first ten years of service there was vital and significant. But it cannot be denied that progress was slow and uncertain. The gradualness with which the police extended this control was really a reflection of the development of that part of Canada. Whereas the Yukon had sprung into sudden life not long after the police established themselves there, the Mackenzie region, throughout the entire period covered by

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1 Compt. Corr., v. 421.
2 Cpl. Somers' report, 7 July 1911, R.N.W.M.P. Report 1911, O, p. 165.

this chapter, remained in the chrysalis stage. The police during the years 1903-1913 did not seem to do very much. In fact, it was not the desire of the government to have anything in particular done; it was the presence of the police which was the object of the entire exercise, although the government officials of the time might not have put it quite that way. The proof of this assertion is the fact, mentioned before, that throughout these ten years the number of police at the two detachments combined never totalled more than eight. Had the government had any positive plans for the area, as opposed to simply laying claim to it, they presumably would have garrisoned it more strongly. However, even police work on a small scale could become complicated, and during the war the Mackenzie Delta was to become the base for a difficult expedition into virgin territory.

CHAPTER IX

EXPANDING ACTIVITIES IN HUDSON BAY

In 1906 there were only two R.N.W.M.P. detachments on the shores of Hudson Bay, at Fullerton and Churchill. This was the same number as in the Mackenzie Delta region, and it might seem that the situation in the two areas was much the same. There were, in fact, similarities, especially the difficulties of climate and transportation which plagued the police in both places. Yet there were significant differences.

In the 1970's, with new discoveries of raw materials and plans for their exploitation, the western Arctic appears to be the new frontier of Canada. Hudson Bay, and especially Churchill, face a static or declining future. Rather the reverse was true sixty years ago; very little thought was given to the western Arctic, while Hudson Bay was in some circles a topic of constant interest as an alternate means of exporting prairie grain. The development of a port on the west coast of Hudson Bay had been a favourite project of western farmers and their representatives since the early 1880's--more than twenty years before the police set foot in the regions. The purpose of the project was to provide a shipping route for grain to England which was shorter and therefore cheaper than the route through Montreal, and to provide an alternative to the C.P.R. as an outlet from the west. By 1904 the idea of building a railroad to Hudson

Bay had been endorsed by both political parties.[1] In 1907 Sir Wilfrid Laurier, speaking in the House of Commons, foresaw "towns and villages on the shores of Hudson Bay like those we see on the shores of Norway, where people will be prosperously engaged in the lumbering business, the pulp industry, the mining industry."[2] Planning and surveying the route began in 1908, and construction in 1910.

Construction of the railway was not completed until 1929, but even before that it was bound to affect all aspects of life in the Hudson Bay region, including the operations of the Mounted Police. After 1907, duties and services having to do with the new railway were a recurring feature of police life in the bay area. It would seem that the police established themselves at Churchill just in time, for that was the point originally proposed as the terminus of the railway.[3] The police in this case took the initiative, and offered to assist government departments concerned with surveying the route. As early as February 1907, White wrote to Frank Oliver, Minister of the Interior, that "As the discussion of the Hudson Bay route appears to have come to stay this time . . . we have a boat . . . which we propose to send up . . . for general patrol work. . . . If you have any surveyors you wish to get into Fort Churchill, we might

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1 A good short discussion of the issue is A.M. Pratt and J.H. Archer, The Hudson's Bay Route, (Governments of Manitoba and Saskatchewan, 1953).

2 Quoted in ibid., p. 49.

3 Later the terminus was shifted to Port Nelson, and later still it was moved back to Churchill.

manage to send them by our vessel."[1]

The boat referred to was the Rouville, a single screw patrol steamer, 125 feet in length, built for the police at Sorel in 1906. The police confidently expected that with a ship of their own, they would no longer be dependent on other agencies for supplies, and would be able to patrol the west coast of the bay for the first time in an effective and satisfactory way. Unfortunately, however, the ship proved a failure. Although it was meant to carry a hundred tons of cargo, it was mistakenly built without proper cargo space. Worse still, its engines were hopelessly inefficient; during its trials in the St. Lawrence it burned nearly a ton of coal an hour.[2] The ship was not sent north. Commissioner Perry tried to put a brave face on the situation by saying that in his opinion the establishment of summer and winter patrols from Norway House to Hudson Bay would provide sufficient communication with the detachment there. The Rouville would be "detailed for other service."[3] It was not possible, however, to conceal the fact that the police had suffered a setback to their plans for Hudson Bay, for they were still dependent on outside agencies for their supplies.

They were not, however, cut off from communication with Regina and Ottawa. Perry was correct in saying that

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1 White to Oliver, 25 February 1907, Compt. Corr., v. 330.

2 The specifications of the Rouville and reports on its trials, are in ibid. This incident did not speak well for the administrative competence of the Laurier government. Patronage was doubtless involved in the ship's construction.

3 R.N.W.M.P. Report 1907, p. 10.

mail service could be maintained by patrols. Some remarkable patrols were carried out in this period between Churchill and southern Canada. One of them, in the winter of 1907-08, involved a journey of over fourteen hundred miles by sled from Mafeking[1] to Churchill and return, with mail and despatches. Another patrol, made by canoe in the summer of 1908, went from Norway House to Churchill, York Factory and return, about 1,250 miles. Both patrols were headed by Insp. E.A. Pelletier.[2]

As the Hudson Bay Railway was slowly pushed towards the bay during the second decade of the century, communications became quicker, for the police on patrol made it a practice to travel to the end of construction by train, and then continue by sled or canoe. Of course the onset of the railway complicated the work of the police in other ways at the same time.

In 1907 Supt. Moodie, then still in command of "M" Division (the two detachments on Hudson Bay), was busy consolidating his new headquarters at Churchill. He found it more satisfactory than his previous headquarters; it was "not nearly so desolate as Fullerton."[3] But there were ways, he felt, in which the work of the police could be made more pleasant and also more effective. Although the presence of a Hudson's Bay Company store at Churchill extended the

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1 A town on the C.N.R. about fifty miles north of Swan River, Manitoba. In 1907 it was the closest point by rail to Churchill.

2 R.N.W.M.P. Report 1907, p. 10.

3 Supt. Moodie's report, 1 January 1907, Compt. Corr., v. 334.

the social life of the police considerably, helped solve the problem of supply, and served to draw in Eskimos and Indians from a wide region, there were serious deficiencies which Moodie thought needed remedying. One was the lack of a doctor, which had adverse psychological as well as physical effects: "When anything is the matter with a man" Moodie reported, "the remainder as well as the man himself begin to look anxious and get low spirited when they realize that there is no doctor within 800 miles."[1] A doctor was detailed for Churchill in 1907, but owing to the failure of the Rouville he did not arrive until 1908.

One of Moodie's great concerns was the extension of police authority in his district, and in this respect, his favourite project was the establishment of a detachment at Baker Lake. The purpose of such a detachment would be to establish contact with the Eskimos of the "Barren Lands," some of whom had had virtually no contact with white men. But it was this very feature which condemned the idea in the eyes of the authorities. As White wrote Moodie in turning down the project, "we must be careful to avoid the establishment of Police Posts as gathering places for the natives, who would become a charge on the Government for subsistence, instead of sustaining themselves by hunting &c. as they have done in past generations."[2] Vilhjalmur Stef-

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1 Supt. Moodie's report, 1 January 1907, Compt. Corr., v. 334.
2 White to Moodie, 15 April 1907, ibid.

ansson would no doubt have approved of this decision, though perhaps for more unselfish reasons. Moodie persisted in proposing his idea, however, and was told rather rudely in 1908[1] and in 1909[2] that the police had no intention of becoming involved in so remote a location. Several years later a detachment was opened at Baker Lake, but this was for a specific purpose.

Mention should be made of another remarkable patrol made to the Barren Lands in 1908 by Insp. Pelletier. The proposed route was from Great Slave Lake to Churchill by way of the Thelon River and Baker Lake. The object of the patrol, as Perry put it, was fourfold:

> 1. To affirm Canadian jurisdiction over this area.
> 2. To report upon the country, and the possibility of a feasible route from the MacKenzie river to the Hudson Bay.
> 3. To report upon the number, the location, and condition of the natives.
> 4. To ascertain whether any permanent detachments of police should be established . . .[3]

Describing the patrol, Perry said "Of many long and arduous patrols made by the force, this has been the most extended and difficult."[4] The party, consisting of Inspector Pelletier and three others, left Fort Saskatchewan on June 1st 1908, and went by Fort Resolution, Pike River, Artillery Lake, Hanbury and Thelon Rivers to Chesterfield Inlet, which they reached on August 31st. There they were met by the

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1 Perry to White, 19 May 1908, Compt. Corr., v. 357.
2 Perry to White, 23 March 1909, Compt. Corr., v. 371.
3 R.N.W.M.P. Report 1909, pp. 22-23.
4 Ibid.

Hudson's Bay Company steamer McTavish, chartered by Moodie to bring the party to Churchill. On the way south the McTavish was wrecked in a storm, and the entire party went to Fullerton to wait for freeze-up. During this part of the trip a member of the party was drowned when the small boat they were travelling in was attacked by a walrus. Leaving Fullerton on November 29th, they reached Churchill on February 7th, and then went overland to Gimli, arriving on March 18th. The time elapsed was nearly ten months and the distance covered was 3,347 miles.[1] The information gathered was to be useful to the police when they found themselves faced with the necessity of conducting police operations over much the same area six years later. Apart from that, the patrol was also an astonishing feat of endurance and living off the land of which even Stefansson might have approved.

As was the case at Fort McPherson, the police at Churchill got along reasonably well with the representatives of the Hudson's Bay Company. This was due to the fact that the police were grateful for the opportunity to talk to someone other than themselves,[2] and also because the police found themselves dependent on the company at times for supplies and other assistance. There are numerous examples of such assistance. For example--the police, having built

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1 R.N.W.M.P. Report 1909, p. 22 ff. Compt. Corr., v. 364, contains the private correspondence pertaining to the patrol.

2 This worked both ways; the company men were glad to have more white men to talk to, and the police were valuable customers.

their post closer to the mouth of the Churchill River than the location of the company's store, found their whaleboats constantly endangered by high water during storms. Beaching the heavy boats above the high water mark proved a difficult job until Moodie prevailed upon the company to provide him with an old capstan with which to winch the boats ashore.[1] The main contribution of the company was in the matter of transportation of supplies, but this minor act of assistance serves to show the small ways in which it made the job of the police easier.

Relations between the police and the Hudson's Bay Company were not always amicable, however. In the winter of 1907-08 there was a sharp quarrel between the police and the clerk in charge of the company's post over the matter of several dogs belonging to the police that had been caught in traps set by the company's men. The tone of the incident is indicative of a clash between two authorities. The Hudson's Bay Company had been established at Churchill as early as 1717, and continuously since 1783.[2] Doubtless the police, in attempting to exercise their authority, encountered some resentment from those who had been accustomed to rule the region for so many years.[3] Such is

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1 Moodie's report, 31 December 1907, Compt. Corr., v. 354.

2 An excellent survey of all the fur trading posts in the area is T. Smythe, "Thematic Study of the Fur Trade in the Canadian West, 1670-1870", an unpublished Staff Report for the National Historic Sites Service, (Ottawa, 1968).

3 It should be noted, however, that relations between the police and C.C. Chipman, Commissioner of the company in Winnipeg during this period, were extremely cordial.

the impression given by Moodie's report of the incident:

> I cautioned Mr. Alston, the clerk in charge here . . . called his attention to Section 501 of the Crim. Code . . . His reply was a very insolent letter saying that such and such were the rules of the H.B. Co. and he would abide by them, that if Police dogs were caught it was our own fault. . . . I issued a summons and Mr. Alston then took back water . . . wrote a letter apologising . . . owning himself in the wrong and offering to replace the injured dogs . . . acknowledged that the rules of the H.B. Co. had no force in the country. On this I consented to drop the case. [1]

Moodie had won an important point in extracting from the clerk the admission that the rules of the company were subordinate to the laws enforced by the police. In this case, however, the Hudson's Bay Company had the last laugh, for Commissioner Perry ruled that Moodie had erred; the traps had been set on company property, and the law, moreover, forbade police dogs or any other dogs to run wild.[2] This did not alter the point that Moodie had made on the spot.

While Churchill became increasingly important and increasingly civilized,[3] the other detachment at Fullerton maintained a precarious existence. The detachment had a very large supply of coal, which had been landed when it was still the headquarters of police operations in the bay,

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1 Moodie's report, 28 February 1908, Compt. Corr., v. 354. This was an unusual event. The clerk must have been uncommonly stupid or rude.

2 Perry to D. McTavish, 6 May 1908, Compt. Corr., v. 359.

3 Moodie's wife came to Churchill to live during the last few years of his service there, and the traders' and missionaries' wives were there too. The presence of white women no doubt ameliorated the bleakness of the place somewhat.

but it was short of almost everything else.[1] Provisioning still had to be done by whaleboat from Churchill, and by the spring of 1909 Perry reported that the stock of supplies at Fullerton was "barely sufficient to carry on the detachment."[2] He then seriously considered closing it altogether. Again the police were compelled to apply to the Hudson's Bay Company for assistance. Moodie was able to persuade the company to carry supplies to Term Point, halfway to Fullerton, from which point they were carried north by whaleboat. Moodie strongly urged that the detachment be kept open, for, as he said, the withdrawal of the post unless it was merely moved to Baker Lake (his old project again) would have a bad effect on the natives: "As long as whalers and traders are north of Chesterfield Inlet, Fullerton is certainly the best place for a detachment. It is doubtful if the whalers will return to the Bay for another year . . . in which case the natives will be entirely

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1 In the summer of 1906, Moodie on his own authority had ordered five hundred tons of coal and lumber landed at Fullerton, for the use of a detachment at Baker Lake, which he advised the police administration year after year to open. It was not opened, and the detachment at Fullerton found itself with a huge oversupply of both items. Churchill needed both, but transportation was so precarious that there was no way to bring it from one post to the other. The coal and lumber stayed for years at Fullerton, unused. See Moodie's report, 31 December 1907, Compt. Corr., v. 354.

2 Perry to White, 23 March 1909, Compt. Corr., v. 371.

dependent upon the Police for obtaining ammunition &c."[1] This is exactly the situation which the government and the police wished to avoid.

The detachment at Fullerton, strangely enough, did not even have an interpreter, which made communication with the Eskimos a difficult proposition. Cpl. M.A. Joyce, in charge of the detachment, asked for an interpreter, remarking that "if such a man was stationed here I think it would be a very short time until the police would be looked upon as the chief authority . . . at present the natives think the whalers can do about as they please, and that the police have very little to say about it."[2] And this was after the police had been in the region for six years. The detachment at Churchill was in a similar position vis-a-vis the natives. Moodie reported in 1909 that "We are still without a Chipewyan interpreter, which makes intercourse with the Indians difficult."[3] In the absence of interpreters, the police had to depend on English-speaking natives and on their own meagre command of native languages, a situation which was obviously not conducive to efficient police work. In 1910 Cpl. Joyce again reported that his efforts were being seriously hampered by the lack of an

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1 Moodie's report, 31 October 1909, Compt. Corr., v. 365.
2 Cpl. Joyce's report, 1 July 1909, ibid. Moodie wrote in the margin opposite this paragraph "Already reported more than once."
3 Moodie's report, 31 October 1909, R.N.W.M.P. Report 1910, III, A, p. 7.

interpreter. During a patrol to Wager Inlet he had heard rumours that an Eskimo had deserted his wife in the middle of the winter. Because he could form only a sketchy idea of the situation, he was unable to pursue the matter: "had I been able to procure a competent interpreter for the trip," he wrote, "I feel confident that the patrol would have resulted in the arrest and conviction of [the Eskimo concerned]."[1]

Joyce made disparaging reference to the whalers: "the natives appear to have a very poor idea of the reason that the police are stationed here, there is little doubt that some of the American whalers who have wintered here have done considerable to confuse the natives in that respect."[2] One wonders how the police expected to enlighten the Eskimos without speaking their language. Joyce singled out George Comer, then commanding the A.T. Gifford, the next-to-last American whaler in the bay, for particular criticism, especially in regard to the payment of customs duty:

> I would judge that Capt. Comer has only paid duty on the stuff he intended trading with the natives (exclusive of what he calls his natives). During the month of April 1909 there was 720 lbs. of tobacco on the schooner, about 500 lbs. of this will be given to the natives for services rendered.[3]

Comer, an amateur anthropologist who had a fine collection of Eskimo artifacts, was in fact on excellent terms with the police administration. A good many personal letters passed

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1 Cpl. Joyce's report, 9 July 1910, Compt. Corr., v. 385.
2 Ibid.
3 Cpl. Joyce's report, 1 July 1909, Compt. Corr., v. 365.

between him and White in which he expressed his friendliness to the police, and his willingness to assist them where he could. In the spring of 1910 Comer was interviewed in Ottawa by a newspaper reporter, and when the interview was printed, he wrote to White: "I saw by the paper . . . that I was quoted as saying that I had by giving the Police provision [sic] kept them from starving. This you will know to be wrong and was not pleasent [sic] reading for me."[1] Later that year, White wrote to Comer asking if he would do the police the favour of taking mail to Fullerton on his next voyage, and if so, how much he could carry. Comer replied "I can say frankly that No package will be to [sic] large for me to take. That a Mother cares to send her Son Or a wife to her Husband or a Sister to a Brother. There fore put no limit to what anyone may wish to send."[2] Here again is the anomaly of the police asking favours of the very man they were supposed to be policing.[3] Comer even on occasion made unofficial reports on the performance of the police themselves. In the winter of 1911-1912, while he was at Fuller-

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1 Comer to White, 25 April 1910, Compt. Corr., v. 390.
2 Comer to White, n.d., ibid.
3 It should be said that the police in turn reciprocated by taking mail to Comer from his wife when he was wintering in Hudson Bay. White wrote Mrs. Comer on one occasion "Please do not put any valuables--beyond love messages in the letters as I could not guarantee their delivery." In the papers relating to his thirty-seven years' service with the police, this is his sole attempt at humour. Compt. Corr., v. 411.

ton, he wrote to Superintendent Starnes[1] to report on the performance of the N.C.O. in charge of that detachment: "While Sergeant Hayter was here his conduct and care of the Barracks were a credit to the Force . . . If he had not traded for furs on the sly, I should have been able to say I would not ask for a better man for such work."[2]

Police policy on trade had not in fact been settled by Moodie's prohibition of 1903. As late as 1908 the police at Churchill were receiving musk-ox skins from the Eskimos, to the dismay of the Hudson's Bay Company.[3] Moodie explained his policy:

> As Esquimaux cannot be prevented from killing for food, the Police are to pay a small sum for any skins brought to them, merely to prevent them being left on the ground to rot but not sufficient to induce natives to go out and hunt them . . . The difference is that the Company and other traders send out natives purposely to hunt these animals . . . The Police impress upon them at all times that they are only to kill when actually in want of food.[4]

Moodie's explanation is partially contradicted by White in a letter written to a Toronto correspondent in 1907, explaining why the police had withdrawn from trade with the natives at Churchill:

> We shipped in a lot of material to be traded, at a little over cost price, for anything they might have to dispose of, or in payment for labour they might

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1 Cortlandt Starnes replaced Moodie in command of "M" Division in November 1909.
2 Comer to Starnes, 12 January 1912, Compt. Corr., v. 424.
3 D.C. McTavish, in charge of the Hudson's Bay Company store at Churchill, to Perry, 29 March 1908, Compt. Corr., v. 359.
4 Moodie to Perry, 29 July 1908, ibid.

> furnish. The Canadian traders then stepped in and criticized the Police for cutting the business from them. This led us to discontinue sending in supplies, and I only protected myself before the Public Accounts Committee by being able to show that the furs we received from the natives were sold in the East, by public competition, at prices greater than the value of goods that were given in exchange. 1

This is a strange business. First Moodie had flatly outlawed trade in musk-ox skins. Then he had permitted the police to receive skins of animals killed for food, so the skins would not be wasted. At the same time the administration of the police was sending in goods specifically for the purpose of trade and payment for work, despite the fact that such trading had been forbidden by police regulations since the days of the Yukon gold rush. Police policy in this respect was confusing and contradictory; it is little wonder that the Hudson's Bay Company was annoyed.

To give the flavour of the life of the police at the two Hudson Bay detachments during this period, a few entries from the detachment diaries might be quoted. First, three days from the early autumn of 1907 at Churchill:

> 28 August 1907--Fine day. Flies very bad. Consts. Rowley, Caldwell, Verity and Stothert working on inside of quarters being got ready for Surgeon. Corpl. Nicholls and Const. Travers on fatigue. Const. Heaps on pass shooting with Inspector Pelletier and party . . . Natives banking up guardroom . . . Indian "David" hired to leave Barracks on 8th Janry. next to go to Split Lake with patrol as guide. Pay 75 skins, and his wife to get rations during his absence.

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1 White to H.S. Blake, K.C., 20 July 1907, Compt. Lbks., v. 138.

> 10th September 1907--Dull day with showers. Corpl. Nicholls issuing rations &c. Consts. Rowley and Caldwell hewing logs in p.m. In a.m. washing walls of barrack room. Employed natives resacking coal on east side.
> 18th September 1907--Showery all day. Southerly winds. Corpl. Nicholls, Consts. Rowley and Caldwell on bg building. Supt. Moodie performed operation on Eliza Oman taking away tumor weighing over 5 lbs. from stomach. Rev. Mr. Sevier very kindly assisted. [1]

Life at Fullerton was much less eventful:

> 5 January 1907--Clear and cool, Temp. 8 a.m.--18°, at 3 p.m. -17°. N.E. wind. Arm inspection this a.m. Two men to their traps this p.m., got one fox.
> 15 January 1907--Fair and cool. Temp. -47 at 8 a.m., at 3 p.m. -41°. No wind. Fatigue in stores, cleaning up things in general. Scottie and Pook [Eskimos] to floe [to hunt for seals] --no luck. [2]

Around the year 1910, activity in Hudson Bay began to increase. In 1909 the Hudson's Bay Company began to found new posts, starting with Erik Cove and Cape Wolstenholme in Ungava. Revillon Frères founded a post at Cape Dufferin. Although these posts were not within the jurisdiction of the police, they noted their establishment with approval as tending to be of advantage to the Eskimos. Supt. Moodie reported that he had been told by a representative of Revillon Frères that the Eskimos at Cape Dufferin "were in a starving condition last winter, and had resorted to murder and cannibalism in consequence." [3] In 1912 the Hudson's

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1 Compt. Corr., v. 354.
2 Ibid.
3 Moodie's report, 31 October 1909, R.N.W.M.P. Report 1910, A, p. 247.

Bay Company began to extend its operations on the west coast of the bay by opening a post at Chesterfield Inlet. Public attention was drawn to Hudson Bay in 1910 when the Governor-General, Earl Grey, travelled from Norway House to York Factory, where he took ship for Labrador and southern Canada.[1] The police were in charge of the arrangements. No doubt the visit, like the Queen's trip to the Northwest Territories in 1970, had overtones of sovereignty. It can be no coincidence that the year of Earl Grey's visit also saw the final arbitration, at the Hague, of the whole question of the rights of the United States to fish in Canadian waters under the Convention of 1818, an arbitration which resulted in a complete vindication of the British and Canadian position.

This new activity helped spur the police to make their own plans for expansion northward along the shore of the bay In 1910, Fred White explained that the police had been deterred from expanding their operations because of the excessive cost involved.[2] The Hudson's Bay Company charged fifteen dollars a ton to carry supplies, and Revillon Frères charged forty-five dollars, and neither company would send its ships north of Churchill for the police. Now, however, an opportunity presented itself. Captain Sam Bartlett, a "life long Navigator," and captain of the Neptune expedition of 1903, had offered his schooner Jeanie to the police

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1 R.N.W.M.P. Report 1910, p. 23.
2 White, memo, 26 February 1910, Compt. Corr., v. 400.
3 Ibid.

for the 1910 season for $6,000. White seized the opportunity to provision the two detachments, and to send the ship north to Repulse Bay to scout the possibilities of opening a third one there.

The use of a ship for the whole season also gave the police a chance to make the route between Fullerton and Churchill more secure. Four ten foot square prefabricated shelter huts were constructed, to be placed at convenient points on the coast between the two detachments. The huts, containing a stove, lamp, bunks, and food, would make the route safer, both by sea and by land.[1] The fate of the expedition and its schooner was by that time a familiar one. One hut was set up at Eskimo Point, and another at Rankin Inlet, but the third could not be set up at Chesterfield Inlet because of strong winds. When the ship reached Wager Inlet, the proposed location of the fourth hut which was to serve as a way station to the new post at Repulse Bay, it was totally wrecked in a gale. The crew sailed in an open boat to Fullerton, and eventually Captain Comer took them in his ship to Churchill.[2] It was another in the long series of mishaps which plagued shipping, particularly that of the police, in Hudson Bay. These mishaps were partly the result of last-minute planning, and of the

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1 White to Perry, 25 May 1910, Compt. Corr., v. 400.

2 The wreck occurred on September 9th 1910, and the crew reached civilization at Gimli on January 15th 1911. See R.N.W.M.P. Report 1911, p. 27; also White to Bartlett, 16 January 1911, Compt. Corr., v. 400, Bartlett apparently did not go north with his ship.

fact that police boats in this era often had amateurs for crew. Because of the red tape involved in having plans and appropriations approved, and the necessity for getting north before the end of season, expeditions were sometimes sent off on two or three days' notice, ill-supplied and haphazardly manned. The attempt to found a new post had ended in failure, and was not repeated for several years.

The small shelters which were successfully put up did prove to be of benefit to the police on patrol. An N.C.O. who used them called them a "great comfort," giving a patrol a "sense of security as they greatly lessen the possibility of disaster." They proved useful as well as reassuring: "They afford a great convenience for fixing your outfit and drying your skin clothing . . . this gets in bad shape camping night after night in snow houses."[1]

The attempt to extend police control north to Repulse Bay in 1910 was an almost complete failure. In 1911, however, the police did manage to expand to the south, with considerably more success. The new location was at York Factory, and the reason for opening a detachment there was a familiar one. Again the police moved largely in response to anguished pleas from the local missionary:

> Owing to the indiscriminate and unlawful use of liquor by the Officials of the Hudson's Bay Company . . . A Missionary who has the interests of the Indians at

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1 Sgt. A.F. Borden's report, 13 March 1911, Compt. Corr., v. 402. Note that the police were by this time using igloos while on patrol.

> heart . . . I ask the Government to station a guardian of the law here . . . The Hudson's Bay Company seem to be slightly wanting in their judgement when they place reckless young men who have little idea of their responsibilities in charge of their business at this post.[1]

Cpl. R.H. Walker, dispatched from Churchill to York Factory in answer to this letter, reported that both the missionary and the manager of the post had requested that a detachment be opened, because of the presence of over a hundred Indians employed each summer unloading goods from the annual steamer.[2]

In response to these requests, a temporary detachment was opened at York Factory (then still part of the Northwest Territories) from August 11th to September 4th 1911. The N.C.O. in charge, Sgt. C.N.C. Hayter, cancelled all liquor permits, seized some liquor, and was able to report that "Everything has been quiet and orderly and there have been no cases of liquor amongst Indians."[3] The company men were not pleased to see their liquor supply dry up, and considerable correspondence ensued between officials of the company and Ottawa. White eventually relaxed the rules to permit them to import liquor for private consumption, but its sale was prohibited. White wrote, "I am disposed to be generous in the issue of permits, provided there is no abuse

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1 R. Ferries, Anglican missionary at York Factory, to Starnes, 1 February 1911, Compt. Corr., v. 410. It will be apparent by now that ideas as to what constituted "indiscriminate use of liquor" varied widely. Some missionaries in particular saw debauchery in every drop.

2 Cpl. R.H. Walker's report, 15 February 1911. Compt. Corr., v. 402.

3 Sgt. C.N.C. Hayter's report, 31 August 1911, ibid. Presumably the seizure was made on White's authority as Commissioner of the Northwest Territories.

. . . I am sure you will understand what I mean."[1]

The new detachment was reopened at York Factory in the summer of 1912, but, indicative of the fluidity of conditions in the area, in the summer of 1913 it was moved around the point of land separating the Hayes and Nelson Rivers, and re-established at Port Nelson. The government had now decided on Port Nelson as the terminus of the Hudson Bay Railway, and already a number of workmen had arrived to begin work on the harbour facilities. The "influx of labourers, mechanics, etc.," the police reported, made it "extremely likely that Criminal cases will occur."[2] To prevent the situation from getting out of hand, the complement of police in "M" Division was doubled, from ten in 1913 to twenty in 1914, of whom eleven were stationed at Port Nelson.[3] The sergeant in charge estimated that over seven hundred men had arrived at the railway terminus during the summer of 1913, and reported: "we experienced great difficulty in keeping order, especially on the ships where mutiny broke out. . . . It is almost impossible to do police work properly."[4] It was just as well that the police increased their strength at Port Nelson, for in the autumn

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1 White to H. Hall, Fur Trade Commissioner at Winnipeg, 21 April 1911, Compt. Corr., v. 410.

2 Supt. F.J.A. Demers' report, 19 September 1913, Compt. Corr., v. 438.

3 The complement of police at Port Nelson in 1913 was originally two, increased to eleven in 1914.

4 Sgt. R.H. Walker's report, 29 December 1913, Compt. Corr., v. 462.

of 1914 the men working on the harbour facilities went on strike when their wages were reduced by ten cents per hour. Because of the presence of the police, no violence occurred during the strike. The police were even able to escort one train from The Pas to the end of steel, carrying food to the "starving foreigners." The strike ended when the company changed its mind and restored the original wage scale.[1]

A workmen's strike was a very sophisticated event to have occurred on the "northern frontier"; it indicated that with the influx of railwaymen the area had reached a level of economic and technological development which put it in a class with the Yukon of 1898--geographically isolated, but otherwise thriving. Port Nelson was not even as isolated as one might think. In February 1914 a wireless antenna was put up at the police detachment, and the police were thereafter able to "receive the daily news from Cape Cod, and an occasional message from Virginia. This is a great boon here, as we receive the news before it is published in the papers in civilization."[2] Sgt. R.H. Walker, who commanded the detachment, was so enthusiastic about the economic prospects of the place that he was taking his discharge to go into business there.[3] Apparently the railway boom had other side effects as well, for it was reported

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1 The police did not become involved in the strike itself. An account of the incident is in Compt. Corr., v. 470.

2 Sgt. Walker's report, 13 February 1914, Compt. Corr., v. 462.

3 Ibid.

that a number of miners had come into the country to prospect along the railway right-of-way.[1] Two new detachments were opened along the railway in 1915, one at Kettle Rapids, and the other, called "Half Way" detachment, at mile 379 from The Pas. They were closed when work on the line was abandoned. There was also a temporary detachment at Split Lake.[2]

In 1914 the importance of Port Nelson became so great that the headquarters of "M" Division was moved there. The police bought four prefabricated structures in Ottawa and sent them north by ship, three to Port Nelson to serve as divisional headquarters and the fourth to Baker Lake.[3] But like several of the good ideas that the police tried out in the north, this one was not very successful. The buildings turned out to be "The usual sort of houses erected at summer resorts."[4] Even when insulated with beaver-board they were cold and drafty. Whoever in Ottawa had the idea of sending summer cottages to Port Nelson caused a lot of shivering and grumbling among the police there.

For a brief time, Port Nelson enjoyed prosperity. By the end of 1917 the entire right-of-way was finished, and a great deal of money had been spent on port facilities.[5] But

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1 Perry, in R.N.W.M.P. Report 1913, p. 39.
2 Comm. Files, v. 60.
3 Ibid., and Compt. Corr., v. 464. The building at Baker Lake was in connection with the patrol to be dealt with in the next chapter.
4 Supt. D.M. Howard's report, 4 December 1914, Compt. Corr., v. 480.
5 Pratt and Archer, op. cit., p. 56.

then, because of the demand for steel and men in the war effort, construction was temporarily halted. The track was not finished, and some of what had already been laid was taken up during the war to be used on other lines, especially in France. In 1918 the police reduced their detachment at Port Nelson to one man, whose only duty was to guard the large amount of supplies still at the port.[1] All the labourers left. Although 322 miles of track had been built from The Pas by 1917, not a rail was laid between 1918 and 1926. By the time construction was finally renewed in 1927, the government had changed its mind and decided to put the port at Churchill.[2] Port Nelson, which had flourished for only four years, disappeared from the map.

Twentieth century civilization had penetrated Hudson Bay by way of Port Nelson between 1913 and 1918. This penetration, however, had surprisingly little effect on the rest of the bay. Because of the continuing difficulties of transportation between points on the coast, Churchill and especially Fullerton continued to remain isolated and remote from the rest of Canada. The establishment of a new Hudson's Bay Company store at Chesterfield Inlet in 1911-1912 proved a great attraction to the Eskimos of the northern coast, who had hitherto regarded Fullerton as the centre of their world.

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1 Comm. Files, v. 61.
2 Pratt and Archer, op. cit., pp. 56-61.

In the winter of 1912-13, the detachment at Fullerton was deserted by all the Eskimos except the two families employed by the police; the rest all went to Chesterfield.[1] In the summer of 1913 activity at Fullerton increased again when an independent trader, F.N. Monjo of New York, opened a post there and many of the natives returned.[2]

Although the Fullerton detachment had performed some useful services for the government--it had, for example, conducted the census in its area in 1911[3]--it really did not do enough to justify the expense and bother of maintaining it. Most of the reports from Fullerton contained passages such as "The work of the detachment has consisted of hunting for dog feed along the floe for the winter's supply. Painting the buildings and boats and repairing the same."[4] Of course the post still fulfilled the objective of demonstrating the presence of the government, which had been its primary purpose. For this reason it maintained a precarious existence, except during the years 1915 to 1917, when it was temporarily closed because of the extra patrol work the police had to do during those years. It was reopened in 1918. The detachment at Churchill, on the other hand, was closed in 1915, so that by 1920

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1 Supt. Demers' report, 17 February 1913, Compt. Corr., v. 438.
2 Sgt. W.G. Edgenton's report, 31 October 1913, Compt. Corr., v. 462. In 1919 the Hudson's Bay Company bought this post and closed it.
3 R.N.W.M.P. Report 1911, IV, C, p. 264.
4 Sgt. Edgenton's report, 31 October 1913, Compt. Corr., v. 462.

the only detachments on Hudson Bay were at Port Nelson and Fullerton.[1] Perry justified the retention of the detachment at Fullerton on the grounds that it protected the Eskimos, exerted a "beneficial influence" on them by discouraging "evil customs" among them, and was "the only point in the vast area tributary to the northern part of Hudson Bay where there is an established authority."[2] It was also a place where the police had made a large investment of buildings and supplies. But by this time the police activity in the bay was static, as their attention turned to a new frontier farther to the north and east.

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1 Compt. Corr., v. 547.
2 R.N.W.M.P. Report 1918, p. 15.

CHAPTER X

PATROLS AND PATROLLING

The subject of patrols is important enough to warrant a short chapter, especially because in some parts of the frontier patrolling was not only the chief, but the sole activity of the detachments.

Police patrols fall into two categories--routine and special. Routine patrols were those carried out on a schedule, either to carry mail, to make a regular visit to a community, to obtain monthly or weekly supplies, to check on game,[1] or for some other usual purpose. Special patrols were sent out for particular purposes--to investigate crimes, to render aid in individual instances, to explore a certain area, sometimes with a view to the establishment of a new detachment, or for some other specific reason.

The word "patrol" suggests the picture of a policeman and his dog-sled, but in the police reports the word is used to describe movement on official business by any means, from foot to steamboat to aeroplane. Most of the regular patrols and the important special patrols on the northern frontier were carried out by dog team at first, simply because this was the best method of travel over the

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1 An annual winter patrol was made, beginning just before the turn of the century, from what is now northern Alberta into the Northwest Territories, to see that the law regarding the killing of buffalo was obeyed. The patrol for 1899 is described in N.W.M.P. Report 1899, pp. 1-2.

greater part of the year. But by the end of the period covered here, sled patrols over the Territories as a whole were outdistanced by other kinds;[1] this, however, occurred only as the north ceased to be a frontier, in the nineteenth century, non-mechanized sense of the word.

Most of the northern police detachments employed one or more natives as dog team drivers; these were Eskimos, Indians, or half-breeds, depending on the location of the post, and they generally lived with their families in a small building belonging to the detachment. The natives, especially the Eskimos, generally did much of the actual work of driving the sleds, which were often their own, the technique of hitching and handling the dogs being determined by the area of origin of the driver. Very often, in remote regions, their wives came along on patrol to cook and tend to the clothes; the police early adopted Eskimo dress for Arctic travel, and this required nightly attention.

The police did not live off the land while on patrol unless they were forced to, or unless they were going such a long distance that it was impossible to carry all the food required. The reason for this was that in order to live off the land in the Arctic, one must be prepared to disregard time to a certain extent, and to go where the game is, and this the police, who operated on a schedule

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1 See chapter XIII.

or had a fixed objective, could not do. Whether they were chasing criminals or investigating the condition of the Eskimos, they could not delay their patrols to hunt seals or search for caribou; thus they took their food with them.

This being the case, the significance of the most famous of all police patrols becomes clear. The Fort McPherson-Dawson patrol of 1910-1911, called the Fitzgerald or the "Lost Patrol," received more publicity than any other in the period under study, chiefly because it was the only one which ended in total disaster. The patrol raised issues, in the press as well as among the police, which reflected upon the method of police operations on the northern frontier, and it is thus of more than merely sensational interest.

The facts of the episode must be briefly related. Inspector F.J. Fitzgerald, two constables, and an ex-policeman acting as guide, left Fort McPherson for Dawson in December 1910, carrying mail.[1] It was unusual for a patrol to follow this route; the regular mail patrol went in the opposite direction. The men became lost in the Richardson mountains, for the guide had never travelled the route in that direction, and they spent a dangerous

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1 The ex-constable's name was Carter; he had taken his discharge, married an Eskimo woman, and settled at Fort McPherson. It was the first properly conducted white-Eskimo marriage in the area.

amount of time looking for the right way to Dawson. Fitzgerald decided to retrace his steps to Fort McPherson, but too late, and all four men died, three of starvation and one by suicide, only a good day's journey from that post.[1]

What had happened? This question was asked not only by the police, who hastened to make an investigation into the disaster, but also by the public and the press, which criticized police methods as being wasteful of lives. When Commissioner Perry wrote to White "this is the most serious catastrophe that the Force has experienced in many a long day,"[2] he referred not only to the loss of men, but also to the damage done the reputation of the police. It seemed difficult to understand what could have gone wrong. Fitzgerald was an experienced and resourceful man who had first come to the Mackenzie Delta in 1903. It was not a case of an amateur making mistakes which led to the tragedy; rather, it was a case of overconfidence, summed up concisely by the Anglican missionary at Fort McPherson:

> They went off short provisioned, for the sake of travelling light, but their dogs were not of the best, and they had no Indian for guide. Carter had been over the trail, four years ago, but was not sure of the crossings . . . [3]

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1 R.N.W.M.P. Report 1911, V; also Compt. Corr., v. 440.
2 Perry to White, 18 April 1911, Compt. Corr., v. 440.
3 Copy of a letter from C.E. Whittaker to Bishop I.O. Stringer at Dawson, 24 March 1911, ibid.

Although the records do not say so directly, the impression is very strong that Fitzgerald was trying to set a speed record, and thus did not take enough provisions to guard against disaster.

The police hierarchy now found itself in the unpleasant position of having to defend itself against newspaper criticism of their established methods. Supt. A.E.R. Cuthbert, an officer of the force stationed at Edmonton, unwisely gave an interview to a reporter from the Bulletin, in which he was quoted as saying that Arctic patrols were useless.[1] A sharp query from Regina brought anguished denials, including the logically dubious assertion, in regard to such patrols, that "the fact of their being carried out showed they were necessary."[2] More to the point, Cuthbert explained that he had told the reporter "The question was a much wider one than appeared to the casual observer, owing to the desireability of Canada asserting sovereignty over every foot of the far north." He continued, "I was aware that considerable criticism was being made of the Northern patrols, among friends of the deceased especially."[3] The tone of his apology shows that the reprimand, which has not survived, was a sharp one; the police felt more irritation from the bad publicity they received over this incident

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1 Edmonton Bulletin, 24 April 1911.
2 Supt. Cuthbert to Perry, 1 May 1911, Compt. Corr., v. 446.
3 Ibid.

than from anything which had appeared in the newspapers for many years.

Perry replied to his critics in his next annual report. The gist of his argument was that dangerous patrols were going on all the time, but that the police did not object to them, so why should anyone else? "In spite of every precaution" he wrote, "a tragedy may occur at any time. It does not deter our men from seeking service there, and it is to the north that many would like to go."[1] He also quoted from a letter written by the Hon. G.W. Brown, Lieutenant-Governor of Saskatchewan: "While the event brings deepest sadness to all, we feel that it is only an event such as this which can give greatest lustre and enduring remembrance to the splendid Force."[2] This seems rather insensitive, but perhaps it was of comfort to the relatives of the deceased; it apparently comforted Commissioner Perry. Nevertheless, to disarm his detractors and to prevent a repetition of the tragedy, he ordered a number of shelter cabins built on the route between Fort McPherson and Dawson, and also between Fort McPherson and Herschel Island.[3]

The most interesting criticism of the episode came from Vilhjalmur Stefansson, who heard of it while still in the north. For Stefansson, the fate of the Fitzgerald pa-

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1 R.N.W.M.P. Report 1911, p. 26.
2 Ibid., V, p. 310.
3 R.N.W.M.P. Report 1912, K, p. 1; also Compt. Corr., v. 447. These were similar to the huts put up north of Churchill along the coast of Hudson Bay.

trol was proof that the police method of Arctic travel was inferior to his own. He had quarrelled with Fitzgerald earlier,[1] and the irony of the situation was not lost on him. When in 1913 he commented on Fitzgerald's death, his tone was one of self-satisfaction:

> . . . the last conversation I had had with Fitzgerald was one in which he told me his thorough disapprobation of my methods of travel, and that if I tried to follow them I should surely come to grief. And here were we in comfort and plenty listening to the story of his tragic death.[2]

Stefansson's general criticism of the police method of patrolling is worth quoting in this context:

> They had failed through the essential weakness of their system of travel, which was to take with them all the food they thought they could possibly need on the journey, without making any preparations for gathering more from the country when their stores should become exhausted. The result was in that case, as it has been in so many others, that when unlooked-for circumstances stretched the time of the journey beyond the limit reckoned on at first, supplies ran out . . . then came death through cold and starvation . . . it had always seemed to me that so long as you are traveling in a country supplied with game, you are safer to start with a rifle and with the resolution to find food (but without a pound of food on your sled), than you would be in starting with a sled heavily loaded with food and with no provision for getting more when the sled load has been eaten up.[3]

It is not the purpose here to debate the "Stefansson method" of Arctic travel. It certainly worked well for him, keeping him alive under all sorts of conditions, thus proving its worth pragmatically. What should be questioned is whether

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1 See chapter VIII.
2 Stefansson, My Life with the Eskimo, p. 339.
3 Ibid., p. 340.

Stefansson's comments on the Fitzgerald patrol really fitted the facts of the case, and whether they can be applied to police patrols in general.

Stefansson says that Fitzgerald's main mistake was taking his food with him instead of living off the land, that "in a country supplied with game" there was no reason why anyone should starve. There are two errors here. In the first place, the mountains between Dawson and Fort McPherson through which the patrol had to pass, do not teem with game. There were very few caribou, and of course no seals. There were a good number of rabbits, but these hardly repay the energy required to catch them, and as Stefansson knew, a man living on rabbit meat will starve for want of fat. Secondly, and this is the important point, Fitzgerald died not because he failed to follow Stefansson's formula for success, but because he deviated from the regular police method of patrolling. His party did not take with them "all the food which they thought they could possibly need" as Stefansson suggested. On the contrary, they travelled as light as possible.[1] The Fitzgerald patrol was an incident outside the ordinary pattern of police operations, and reflects not upon police methods (as Stefansson implies) but upon the bad luck and poor judgement of Fitzgerald himself. The fact that the incident was unique

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1 Ironically, the record sought by Fitzgerald was set by the rescue patrol, which under Cpl. W.J.D. Dempster went from Dawson to Fort McPherson and back in forty-two days, including a stopover. Perry to White, 18 April 1911, Compt. Corr., v. 440.

among the hundreds of similar patrols carried out by the police--a fact well emphasized by Perry--is further proof of this assertion.

Of the many special patrols carried out by the police, two may be cited as representative; these are the two made during the first World War to investigate four bizarre murders. These patrols were of special importance for several reasons. They were journeys of discovery for the police; few white men and no member of the Mounted Police had seen the territory which was to be covered. They were significant from the point of view of police-Eskimo relations, for the police on these patrols met men who had never before seen a white man. The patrols were important in emphasizing Canadian control over the central Arctic coast. Nothing establishes sovereignty over an area more clearly than effective policing of it. If murderers could be successfully tracked down and arrested near Coronation Gulf, then Canada's right to the area would seem clear and certain.[1]

The first case was that of H.V. Radford and George Street. Radford was an American explorer of considerable experience, who had been active in the north at least as early as 1909.[2] Street, his companion, was a young and in-

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1 Some special patrols of the 1920's which were made for purposes of sovereignty are discussed in chapter XII.

2 There is a record from that year of him presenting his credentials to the police at Fort Chipewyan. Compt. Corr., v. 383.

experienced man from Ottawa. In June 1912 they were murdered by Eskimos at the southern end of Bathurst Inlet, apparently because Radford, who presumably should have known better, had threatened and struck an Eskimo who was acting as a guide and servant to the expedition. As anyone who knew anything about Eskimos was aware, threatening an Eskimo was one thing that was never safe to do. The more primitive of the Eskimos believed that if a man spoke harshly to you, he had it in his mind to kill you, and it was thus reasonable and proper to kill him first. This is what happened to Radford, and Street was the victim of his companion's stupidity. Radford had a reputation in the north for being bad-tempered; at one point he had threatened the police with a lawsuit because they would not let him shoot a wood-buffalo.[1]

News of the murders reached the police and the public about a year after they occurred, when an Eskimo who had been with the party told H.H. Hall, the Hudson's Bay Company officer at Chesterfield Inlet, what had happened. Hall passed the news on to the police at Churchill.[2] There was

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1 Comm. Files, v. 60. On his first trip to the north, Radford had made himself so unpopular with the crew of the boat carrying him down the Athabasca that they played a practical joke on him. Radford, who was keen on collecting trophies, was called on deck to shoot a bear which had been discovered on shore. He fired numerous shots at it, only to discover that the "bear" was a log, dressed in an old fur coat. He took the joke very badly. Ibid.

2 H.H. Hall to G.R. Ray, Hudson's Bay Company man in charge of the Nelson River District, 11 June 1913, Compt. Corr., v. 556; also Comm. Files, v. 60.

considerable public interest in the crime, partly because of its bizarre details, and partly because it had taken place in such a remote spot. Press reaction was mixed. One school of thought held that the whole incident should be ignored, that the murdered men had brought their fate on themselves: "Men who go into a country like that must take chances of such a fate, and can hardly look for governmental protection . . . [if they are tactful] they are not likely to be exposed to any serious danger."[1] The other point of view was quite the opposite: "Justice in Canada is supposed to be administered without regard to cost . . . If the slayers of these men go unpunished, no man's life will be save [sic] hereafter in the far northern Frontier. . . . They should be brought to trial if it costs a million."[2]

Fairly quickly a decision was taken by the police, in consultation with Prime Minister Borden, to carry out a patrol. It was not to be a punitive expedition, but one to "establish friendly relations with the tribe, secure their confidence, and carefully inquire into all the circumstances."[3] This was the policy which would be most beneficial to the Eskimos, and would probably be the most popular with the Canadian public, whose view of this particular racial minority was sentimental and generally approving.

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1 Edmonton Journal (Conservative), 15 December 1913.
2 Edmonton Bulletin (Liberal), 15 December 1913.
3 Perry, in R.N.W.M.P. Report 1914, p. 23.

The story of the expedition to investigate the murders of Radford and Street is a fascinating one, but too long and complicated to cite fully here.[1] The murders took place in June 1912, and the news reached the police in June 1913. They decided that the best way to investigate the affair was to establish a base at Baker Lake, and from that point send a patrol overland to Bathurst Inlet, the scene of the crime. At the end of July 1914, a schooner, the Village Belle, purchased by the police for the work, set out from Halifax. It arrived in Hudson Bay too late to reach Baker Lake that season, so the expedition, under the command of Inspector W.J. Beyts, wintered at Port Nelson.

The season of 1915 was spent in getting to Baker Lake. In the winter of 1915-1916 an advance camp was set up on the Thelon River. In 1916, nothing much was done, and the police, dissatisfied with the pace of events, replaced Beyts with Inspector F.H. French. It was not until the winter of 1917-1918 that a successful patrol was carried out; the murderers were finally found when the crime was nearly six years old. The reason the affair took so long was that the original leader of the expedition, Insp. Beyts, allowed

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1 It was reported at great length in the annual reports of the police during the years it was being carried out.

2 This brief account is based on a summary in R.N.W.M.P. Report 1918, p. 14. A great deal of correspondence regarding the expedition may be found in Comm. Files, vols. 58, 59, and 60; also in Compt. Corr., vols. 556 and 557.

himself to be overwhelmed by the admittedly tremendous difficulties of moving a rather ponderous lot of equipment and men through such difficult country.

What is of interest here is that the police did more than simply solve the crime. They accomplished a good deal in the way of exploration and surveying. One of the members of the party, Constable A.B. Kennedy, an ex-Royal Navy man with a good knowledge of map-making, made an extensive survey of the Baker Lake-Chesterfield Inlet area between 1915 and 1916, covering 1,154 square miles:

> Upwards of thirty islands have been located and charted for the first time; these vary in size from . . . 100 sq. miles in area to mere islets . . . native names have been obtained wherever possible . . . [1]

A new chart was made of Baker Lake itself. Kennedy wrote "If this sheet be compared with the previous existing survey, that of Tyrell [sic], 1900, it will be seen that there are very great alterations, more especially in regard to distances . . ."[2] This work was in connection with the police base at Baker Lake, but it also had a wider usefulness in increasing the government's knowledge of that part of the Northwest Territories.

The police also came into contact with Eskimos who had previously had no dealings with whites at all. As Insp. French reported: "I came upon large bands . . . on Kent Peninsula and around Bathurst Inlet who had never

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1 Const. Kennedy's report, 1 August 1916, Comm. Files, v. 58.
2 This must refer to the party headed by J.W. Tyrrell which explored the country between Great Slave Lake and Hudson Bay for the Topographical Surveys Branch of the Department of the Interior in 1900. Compt. Corr., v. 556.

seen white men before."[1] It should be re-emphasized that the purpose of the expedition was not punitive. It was realized that the murderer or murderers had probably acted in what the Eskimos would consider to be self-defence. The government and police intended that patrol mostly as an investigation of the case. Before it set out, Prime Minister Borden conferred with Sir Wilfrid Laurier, seeking the benefit of his experience, and asking his advice as to what the attitude of the police should be towards the guilty Eskimos. Borden passed on Laurier's advice to the police:

> He considers the Eskimos a very peaceable race and thinks that . . . no Jury would convict them. He thinks the way you suggest--to quietly bring these people under the influence of the law--is the only course to be followed.[2]

This was the principle on which the entire long expedition was carried out. The police met with no opposition from the Eskimos, therefore, beyond a certain natural suspicion which they bore towards strangers.

The upshot of the whole affair was that after an extensive investigation, including interviews with Eskimos who had witnessed the murders, the police came to the conclusion that the original explanation of the affair was the correct one. Radford had precipitated the murders by his foolishly harsh treatment of his Eskimo companions. As

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1 Insp. French's report, 27 March 1918, Compt. Corr., v. 557.

2 Borden to Lawrence Fortescue, 5 May 1914, Compt. Corr., v. 557. Fortescue joined the N.W.M.P. on its formation in 1873, was commissioned in 1875, and transferred to the "inside service" in 1879. He became chief clerk in 1892 and succeeded Fred White as Comptroller in 1913. He retired in 1918.

one police officer put it, Radford's action was "not a safe way to deal with Esquimaux."[1] The band of Eskimos among whom the murders had occurred (the Killinimuits) were finally found, the culprits confessed willingly, but in accord with the government's policy, the matter was not pressed further.

The other murder case was remarkably similar, and is also worth commenting upon for what it shows of police operations in the Arctic. The chief difference was that in the second case the whole affair was not so drawn out, and the eventual treatment of the Eskimos involved was also different, partly because the victims were priests, and partly because the authorities were not prepared to be as lenient a second time.

The case concerned the murder of Fathers Rouvière (sometimes spelled without the last "e") and Le Roux, two Oblate missionaries who had been working among the Eskimos of the Coppermine River region. They had a small cabin at the north-east end of Great Bear Lake, which they used as a base camp for expeditions to these relatively unknown people.[2]

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1 Supt. D.M. Howard, commenting on a copy of a letter from Radford to S.A. Ford, Hudson's Bay Company officer at Chesterfield Inlet, n.d., in which Radford described his method of dealing with Eskimos: "However, his [an Eskimo's] 'butting in' aggravated me considerable [sic], and I was tempted to hand him a little chastisement. Street and I, finding that his influence is being used against us decided to give him some mild punishment, and since then he has been excluded from our igloo." Compt. Corr., v. 556.

2 Perry to Fortescue, 28 November 1916, Compt. Corr., v. 550.

They were last heard of in 1913, and the first intimation of their fate was in the summer of 1914, when a man named D'Arcy Arden, who was exploring the Dease River near Great Bear Lake, met an Eskimo who was wearing a cassock.[1] The priests, it was eventually learned, had been killed late in 1913 near Bloody Falls, on the Coppermine River. The cause of the murders was almost exactly the same as with Radford and Street. One of the priests, Father Le Roux, had become impatient with the Eskimos who were acting as their guides and servants, and had threatened one of them. The confession of one of the murderers shows clearly what happened:

> Ilogoak [Le Roux] was carrying a rifle. He was mad with us when we started back from their camp and I could not understand his talk. I asked Ilogoak if he was going to kill me and he nodded his head. . . . he pushed me again and wanted me to put on the harness and then he took his rifle out on top of the sled. I was very scared and started to pull. We went a little way and Uluksak and I started to talk and Ilogoak put his hand over my mouth. Ilogoak was very mad and was pushing me. I was thinking hard and crying and very scared and the frost was in my boots and I was cold. I wanted to go back. I was afraid. Ilogoak would not let us. Every time the sled stuck Ilogoak would pull out the rifle. I got hot inside my body. . . . I was very much afraid. . . . he looked away from me and I stabbed him in the back with a knife.[2]

It was at first thought that the priests might turn up

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1 Compt. Corr., v. 579.
2 Statement of Sinnisiak, 17 May 1916, ibid. There is a long series of reports on the case in R.N.W.M.P. Report 1916, appendices O to W.

alive and well, but that they might have been robbed, since their small cabin had been ransacked. If this were the case, the officer in charge of the investigation, Inspector C.D. La Nauze, was ordered to catch the thieves and impose a small fine. Harsher treatment would not be necessary, as "this is the first occasion enforcement of the law has taken place in this remote district."[1]

The truth became generally known in the spring of 1915, and the police prepared to send out a patrol in the next year. In the summer of 1915 a patrol from Fort Norman established a depot at Dease Bay on Great Bear Lake. Between the end of March and the end of May 1916, a patrol was made from this depot to the Coppermine River and beyond. All circumstances were investigated and the culprits were arrested. By the end of June 1916 the party had arrived at Herschel Island with the prisoners. The reasons why this case was solved more quickly than the other were that the distances involved were much shorter, the police had a ready-made base camp at Dease Bay (they used the priests' cabin), and the patrol was fortunate enough to fall in with the Canadian Arctic Expedition, who helped them with supplies and information, and loaned the police their ship for the journey to Herschel Island. The two

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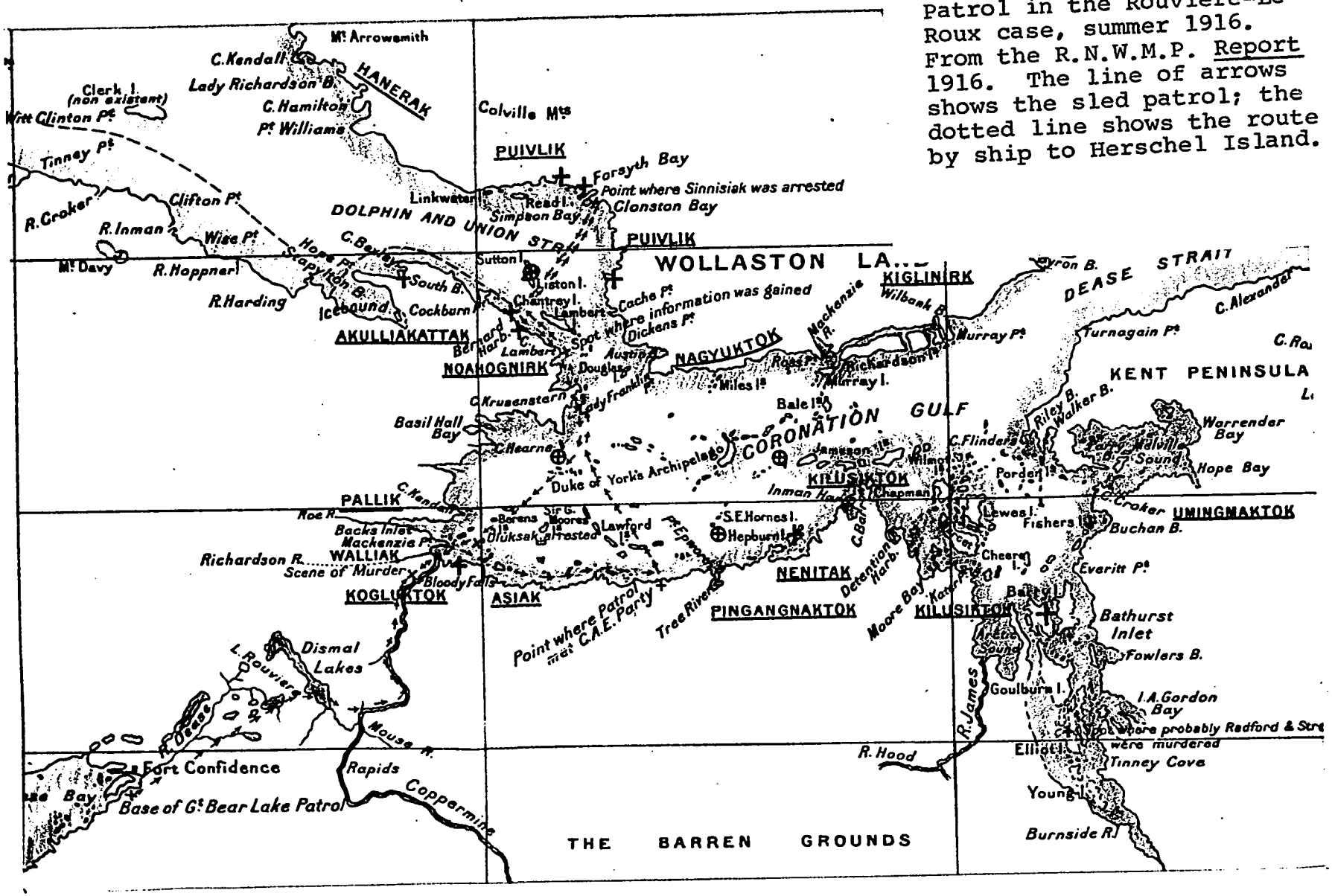
1 Perry to La Nauze, 10 May 1915, Comm. Files, v. 58.

Map IV.

Route of the Great Bear Lake Patrol in the Rouvière-Le Roux case, summer 1916. From the R.N.W.M.P. Report 1916. The line of arrows shows the sled patrol; the dotted line shows the route by ship to Herschel Island.



Eskimo prisoners were taken south and charged with murder. The disposition of this case is significant from the point of view of police-Eskimo relations, and will be discussed in chapter XI.

The actual "technique" of patrolling bears some examination, for it shows the way the police adapted themselves to Arctic conditions, borrowing ideas and methods from the natives which seemed suitable for their purpose. The best way to illustrate these techniques is to quote from the numerous patrol records which appear in the annual police reports. Details vary from one patrol to another, depending mostly on its purpose and where it was going, but a good example is the patrol made in the spring of 1917 from Baker Lake to the Arctic coast in connection with the Radford and Street affair. This shows all the features which appear in reports of police patrols--the daily record of events, comments on the natives, game, and geography. The main report is accompanied by shorter crime reports, giving the statements of several witnesses in the case.

The patrol in question was made up of two members of the R.N.W.M.P., Inspector F.H. French and Sergeant-Major T.B. Caulkin, two "police natives" (that is, regular Eskimo employees), one "hired native" and an Eskimo woman. The patrol also took two canoes and twenty-five dogs, enough for three sleds. The party left Baker Lake on March 21st 1917 and reached Bernard Harbour on June 13th. There they

spent the summer, returning to Baker Lake in the following autumn and winter. The distance covered by foot and sled was 2,483 miles; 1,835 "over routes" in direct pursuit of their objective, 284 miles hunting for caribou, 114 miles hunting seal, and 250 miles in various directions searching for Eskimo camps.[1]

The chief difficulties facing this patrol, as was the case with other similar patrols in the Arctic, were not with the Eskimos, who were almost uniformly cooperative, but with supplies, terrain, and climate. The men could take only a month's rations with them, and after the end of April were compelled to live off the land. In this they were quite successful; Insp. French reported no shortage of caribou until they reached the coast, and then they were able to kill seals and trade for meat (and fish for the dogs) when they encountered bands of Eskimos. It can be seen from the report that it was not easy for the police to acclimatize themselves to an Arctic diet; one made up entirely of meat disagreed with them, and "going on two meals of half-raw deermeat during the day . . . 14 or 16 hours between meals" told on their health. Nor did they have much luck with cooking over a stone blubber lamp when they ran out of coal-oil. In general, though, partly

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1 These figures are for the outward trip only; by the time the men reached Baker Lake they had covered 5,153 miles. For a popular account of the patrol see I.S. Anderson, "Bathurst Inlet Patrol," The Beaver, Spring 1972.

because of the assistance rendered by their Eskimo companions, they were reasonably well supplied with food; no worse, at least, than the indigenous population.

The climate and terrain proved difficult chiefly because of the season in which they travelled. By the end of May the weather was warm enough to melt much of the snow, and the patrol was inconvenienced by having to travel along the sides of creek beds, where the snow was deeper. The sun made the sea-ice treacherous, and the last part of the outward journey, along the coast from Bathurst Inlet to Bernard Harbour, was the most uncomfortable, because the men were continually wet. The patrol lived in igloos until the heat brought down the roof and forced them into their tent.[1] But these misadventures happened regularly to everyone in that country, white and Eskimo alike. In general, the report shows that the members of this patrol (and this is true of most other Arctic patrols) coped with the difficulties of supply and geography as well as, or better than, any other white man, and perhaps nearly as well as the natives themselves. This was largely due to the fact that they relied upon Eskimo technology and experience wherever circumstances permitted. If the police were going rapidly from one specific point to another, as was the case with the Fitzgerald patrol, they might run into trouble. But wherever they could adopt the customs

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1 On the return journey, early in January 1918, they experienced temperatures of -72° south of Aberdeen Lake.

and procedures of the country through which they were travelling,[1] they did so, and were remarkably successful.

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1 The reports from Insp. French's patrol were printed in R.N.W.M.P. Report 1918, A. A shortened version of the main report, illustrating the points made in the chapter, appears in appendix D of the present work.

CHAPTER XI

THE POLICE AND THE NATIVE PEOPLES OF THE NORTHERN FRONTIER

> Canada . . . was integrating that region [the Arctic] with the rest of the country, and would enforce there her laws. But what plans she entertained, if any, for the welfare of its Eskimos she wrapped in silence. [1]

Diamond Jenness' trenchant comment on Canadian government policy in the Arctic is a good place to begin an examination of the relationship between the instruments of that policy--the police--and the native peoples.[2]

Jenness, speaking of government policy, says that its basic premise was erroneous, in that it accepted the responsibility for maintaining law and order in the Arctic while refusing to accept any of the responsibilities which go with sovereignty: "The administration of the Arctic, handled in the end entirely by the police, was as static and unprogressive as police-run states generally are."[3] The fact that the Comptroller of the R.N.W.M.P. was also for a time the Commissioner of the Northwest Territories did not mean that the police had any great influence on government policy towards the Arctic. The government had so little positive interest in the north before 1920 (apart from its rather static conception of sovereignty) that it found it con-

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1 Jenness, op. cit., p. 20.

2 The word "natives" is used simply as a convenient collective noun for Indians and Eskimos when the two are considered together; it also allows, in some areas, for a certain admixture of white blood.

3 Ibid., p. 21.

venient to have the police and the token government administration handled by the same man.[1] The police "were only the instruments of a policy (or lack of policy) which they neither planned nor formulated . . . They merely carried out the broad functions assigned to them by the Minister of the Interior, the Prime Minister, and ultimately Parliament."[2]

Thus it was not the fault of the police, either by wish or by deed, that there were no government schools, hospitals, or any other services for the native peoples of the north during this period. The fate of these people was left entirely in the hands of the traders, the missionaries, and the police, but this was not necessarily the wish of the police. Constant and repeated appeals for doctors, health services, schools, and financial assistance for the natives came from police detachments in the north. The usual reply from Ottawa was either silence, or instructions for the police to do the best they could with their own resources to ameliorate the worst of the suffering among the Indians and Eskimos. Diamond Jenness realized this fact. Even Farley Mowat, no friend of government agencies, dealt fairly gently with the police when he con-

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1 Frederick White was Commissioner of the Northwest Territories from 1905 until his death in 1918. The job was a sinecure; White's main duty was to distribute small sums to various church mission schools. About $5,000 per year was spent on the Territories.

2 Jenness, op. cit., p. 23.

demned the government for its neglect of the Eskimos.[1] In Canada North, he even speaks warmly of them.[2] Not every writer has held the police in high esteem; R.A. Davies, in The Great Mackenzie, wrote that the police were "great white fathers" instead of "counsellors and aides," and claimed that the police "held back the stimuli of self-development."[3]

The detachments founded by the police quickly became centres for the natives--places of employment, of trade (especially when there were white traders present as well), and, in hard times, places to go for assistance. The detachments at Herschel Island and Fullerton attracted Eskimos only, those at Fort McPherson and Churchill attracted Indians and Eskimos, and those in the Yukon and at Port Nelson and York Factory only Indians.[4] It is important to note that, as a general rule, the police behaved in quite a different way towards the Indians than towards the Eskimos. They made a conscious distinction between the two races; because of this distinction, the relations between the police and each of the two native races will be treated separately, the Indians first.

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1 See his book The Desperate People, (Boston, 1959), for an angry but not unreasonable history of the Eskimos of the central Barrens.

2 On p. 108.

3 R.A. Davies, The Great Mackenzie, (Toronto, 1947), p. 96. Davies writes from a Marxist point of view, and could not be expected to think well of the police. Exactly what "stimuli" were suppressed he does not say.

4 The Fort McPherson Indians were Hare, Kutchin, and Dogrib. Those at the Hudson Bay posts were mostly Cree, with some Chipewyan.

It hardly needs to be said that the Mounted Police were no strangers to Indians. Since the founding of the N.W.M.P. in 1873, one of its primary tasks had been to interpret Canadian laws for, and enforce them on, the Indians of the plains. The approach taken to the Indians of the far north was much the same. These Indians were generally quite accustomed to white men. On the shores of Hudson Bay for two hundred years, and in the Mackenzie Delta for sixty, they had become increasingly involved with, and dependent on, traders and missionaries. Since the police were accustomed to deal with Indians, and the Indians were used to the ways of whites, there was virtually no open conflict between the police and the Indians in the new areas where the police began to establish their power after 1903. The chief effect of the advent of the police on the Indian way of life was that one more set of rules was added to it. Laws which the Hudson's Bay Company factor had not bothered with, were now to be enforced. If the Indian obeyed them he was left alone by the police, for better or worse.

How did the police view the Indians of the north? The evidence in the records of the police shows undoubtedly that they looked upon them with a mixture of paternalism and contempt. The evidence of this feeling is too massive for denial. As one example, a report from Fort McPherson on the condition of the Indians there at the end of 1906: "There are about thirty . . . around the post this winter

. . . They all complain of game being scarce, but the most of them are too lazy to hunt."[1] There may have been any number of reasons why the Indians did not hunt in this instance--perhaps they were sick, of did not think it worthwhile--perhaps they were what sociologists call "alienated" by the white man's culture. But for the police they were always "lazy"; the word reappears like a Calvinist refrain through their reports.

There is also ample evidence of the paternalism. A good example of it, which incidentally shows how the police explained their mission to the Indians they were meeting for the first time, is an account of two speeches made by Insp. E.A. Pelletier, while on a patrol from Norway House to Churchill in 1907. The first was made at Cross Lake to a band of what Pelletier called "good Indians," and reveals the patronizing tone the police adopted when speaking to them:

> I want to tell you something about us. We, the Police, have just come into this territory. We have not come here to trade, we are wealthy; we have come here to look after everything, to see that everybody behaves well. We have always been the great friend of the good Indians. We are just the same to white men; we punish bad Indians and bad white men just the same . . . Whenever you and your councillors have trouble with your people, come to us and explain matters; have confidence in us for we are here for your good. Whenever white traders ill use you or steal from you come to us without fear and tell us. We are not properly settled here and have no suitable buildings as yet, but perhaps next year we will build proper houses for ourselves . . . [2]

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1 Cpl. Haylow's report, 31 December 1906, Compt. Corr., v. 353.
2 Insp. Pelletier's report, 22 March 1907, Compt. Corr., v. 327.

There was another band in the same area which was not so well-behaved. Pelletier said that they were beginning to discover that the local Indian Agent had no real power over them, and in consequence were increasingly becoming "immoral, lying, unscrupulous, and thieving." To this group he made a sterner speech:

> I am very sad to hear these reports. We were under the impression that the Indians in this country were good Indians, obedient to their Chief and councillors, but I see now that this is not so. If this keeps going on amongst your tribe we will be compelled to build a jail at Norway House and will get after the bad Indians. I want you to go round your people and tell them that we have had nearly enough of their bad behaviour, that we are keeping track of all those that do wrong . . . It is for them to behave themselves well so that we may be inclined to forget and forgive them their bad conduct up to the present. [1]

Nowadays such speeches might be considered ludicrous, not least by the Indians themselves, who are often much too sophisticated for the "great white father" approach. But in 1907 this was the accepted way of talking to Indians, especially ones who had had little contact with the police.

The attitude of the police towards the Indians they encountered in the Yukon, it may be remembered, was generally that they were a lazy, dirty nuisance, to be given meagre aid if they were actually starving, but to be ignored as much as possible. Relations with the Indians occupied only a small part of the attention of the police in the Yukon. They were a much more important part of the society of the Mackenzie Delta and Hudson Bay; nevertheless, the attitude

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1 Insp. Pelletier's report, 22 March 1907, Compt. Corr., v. 337.

of the police in these latter areas was much the same. As an example, here are Insp. D.M. Howard's comments on the hardships of the Mackenzie Delta Indians in 1907:

> These Indians are to blame themselves for a good deal of the shortness now prevailing, as they can easily put up enough fish to last them over the winter, but they are too lazy to do it, and the more you do for them, the more you may. 1

Nevertheless, Howard did issue enough supplies to keep the Indians alive.

Police comments on the Indians were not entirely negative; they did have a vague but positive idea of what the Indians ought to be doing. Most members of the force in the north seem to have felt that the Indians would be best off giving up the white man's vices and concentrating on hunting, fishing, and trapping; that the virtues of hard work would be the best preparation for coping with the rest of the world. How the Indians were supposed to rise above the subsistence level was never made clear; the police fixed their attention on the first stage of the process--self-discipline--believing that if the Indians would only buckle down to honest work, the rest would come naturally. The Indians did not think this way at all, of course, which perhaps explains some of the lack of understanding between the two groups.

Were the police satisfied that the Indians' "laziness" was the sole cause of their misfortune, or did they look

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1 R.N.W.M.P. Report 1907, K, p. 115.

beneath the surface to determine why the Indians were in such a miserable condition? Certainly the Indians' own failings were judged to be a major cause of their distress. But the police were not as superficial in their assessment of the problem as at first might be supposed. Many of them realized that the Indians were victims of circumstances over which they had no control. In this respect, the activities of the Hudson's Bay Company came in for a good deal of criticism. Supt. Moodie, for example, speaking of the Indians at Churchill, reported that "The H.B. Co. has the Indians so completely in its power that they are afraid to work for others and every effort is used to prevent them from meeting the police." He went on to describe how he had defeated the company's attempt at Churchill to increase its profits by one third at the expense of the Indians; he had threatened to trade with the Indians himself until the company capitulated and agreed to take the usual profit.[1] The company had, over the course of many years, established a relationship with the Indians which reduced them in some instances almost to the level of serfs. The manner in which the company advanced credit to the Indians against the next year's catch often bound them to the company by a continuous debt. But in fairness it must

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1 Supt. Moodie's report, 31 December 1907, Compt. Corr., v. 354. One wonders why the company capitulated, since Moodie's threat was pure bluff; what he proposed was illegal.

be said that the company's practice in this respect was dictated by economic necessity and the experience of over two hundred years; in order to regularize the trade, it was found necessary to keep the Indians in the company's debt. Some of the police also realized that there were two sides to the question. Giving credit to the Indians always involved a certain amount of risk, for sometimes they would "procure goods for their season's hunt and forget to return with fur in the spring," and when there was more than one trading concern in the area, the Indians would not hesitate to play them off against each other.[1]

What happened to the northern Indians during the first World War is a very good example of how they were victimized by circumstances over which they had no control. When the war broke out, the price of furs fell badly, and the Hudson's Bay Company stopped giving the Indians credit, or "debt," as it was called. At York Factory the company, as an economy measure, ceased its usual practice of giving supplies to destitute Indians, and informed the local missionary that it would "not be responsible for any cases of want amongst the Indians in the future."[2] The result of this new policy was, in some cases, severe privation for the Indians; as the police at Athabaska Landing re-

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1 Insp. A.M. Jarvis' report, Fort McPherson, 12 February 1908, Compt. Corr., v. 353.

2 A.W. Patterson to Rev. R. Faries, 25 March 1915, Comm. Files, v. 58. Faries wrote a highly indignant reply, condemning the company for deserting "the people who have been the BACKBONE of a profitable business."

ported, they had been caught "absolutely unprepared, and consequently many of them had a somewhat hand-to-mouth existence."[1] It is dangerous, perhaps, to generalize on one or two examples, but the observations made by the officer quoted above are not untypical. He found a ray of hope in the economic problems faced by the Indians during the war; from present adversity they might learn the virtue of self-reliance: "The Indians are not a provident race and possibly the inexorable terms under which they are obliged to trade now, 'nothing for nothing,' may teach them the value of laying by for a rainy day."[2]

Another example of such thinking on the part of the police comes from the Mackenzie Delta. In 1909, there was talk of making a treaty with the Indians of the Mackenzie region. The police officer in charge of the area advised against a treaty, on the grounds that the annual payment of money would only harm the Indians: "They would spend the cash in a day, eat all the provisions in a week, and then be worse off than ever." He believed that what the Indians really needed to improve their situation was a good spell of adversity, which would strengthen their character: "The traders . . . all informed me that during the past two years when the traders were compelled to curtail the large advances usually given against fur, that the Indians had

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1 Supt. A. McDonnell's report, 1 October 1915, R.N.W.M.P. Report 1915, G, p. 146.

2 Ibid.

never worked so hard and so well."[1]

It might well be asked what the Department of Indian Affairs was doing for the Indians of the northern frontier. The answer, in the Northwest Territories as earlier in the Yukon, was--very little. The Indians of the Mackenzie, not being under treaty, were left to the care of the missionaries, traders, and police, until an agency was opened at Fort Simpson in 1913. Those at Churchill, York Factory, and Port Nelson were covered by Treaty No. 5, which was extended to them in 1909. Under the treaty, the Indians received the usual payments, and nothing else. What few administrative duties were required--payment of treaty, taking the census, distribution of land scrip to the Métis--were carried out by the police. For all the good that these duties did the Indians, the police might as well not have bothered; Supt. C. Starnes' account of the distribution of scrip at Churchill in 1911 shows clearly that the aid provided by the government was of no lasting use to the natives:

> I also received a parcel containing scrip to be issued to half-breeds here and at York. . . . Two buyers arrived here from York . . . for the purpose of securing these scrip . . . They were rather annoying to me and commenced to worry me even before I had received the scrip . . . I am informed . . . that most of the scrip was secured by the men for $450 each.[2]

Nor was the money sent to the police for distribution as

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1 Insp. G.L. Jennings' report, 1 August 1909, Compt. Corr., v. 383. A treaty was signed in 1921.

2 Supt. Starnes' report, 8 August 1911, R.N.W.M.P. Report 1911, IV, A, pp. 251-252.

an annuity to the Indians of much use to them. In 1915, for instance, $3,300 was distributed among the Indians at York and Churchill, but almost every penny of it immediately went to the Hudson's Bay Company for payment of debt,[1] and the Indians were no better off than before.

When one reads through a large number of the public and private reports of the police concerning the Indians of the northern frontier during this period, the impression given is one of squalor, disease, and neglect. The police did what little they could--distributed supplies, sparingly, and sent their doctor to look after the sick--but they always seem to have become quickly annoyed by the Indians' stolid refusal to follow their good advice or to show appreciation for their help. The police doctor at Churchill in 1915 reported that the Indians there were suffering badly from tuberculosis. "I have repeatedly explained to them" he wrote, "the infectious nature of the disease, how it spreads, and how it could be lessened. My advices seem to have been of very little use, and results have been very discouraging."[2] It does not take much imagination to picture the scene: the police doctor talking earnestly about germs and sanitation, and the Indians staring at him, indifferent and uncomprehending. The story was the same everywhere. At Port Nelson, Supt. Howard reported that the Indians were

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1 Supt. D.M. Howard's report, 8 December 1915, Compt. Corr., v. 506.

2 Acting Assistant Surgeon P.E. Doyle's report, 12 January 1915, Compt. Corr., v. 480.

"full of consumption," and that it was "impossible to get them to take the most ordinary precautions to guard against it."[1]

It is easy to see how exasperation quickly changed to contempt. The police were not sociologists or anthropologists, and none of their formal training equipped them to deal sensitively and intelligently with the problems of the northern Indians, even if the means of assistance had been made available by the government--which was not the case. The pattern must have repeated itself again and again. A young policeman came to the north, saw the squalor of the Indian way of life, was horrified, and gave the Indians what assistance he could and much good advice. The Indians squandered the aid and ignored the advice. Very soon the policeman decided the Indians were not worth bothering with. Copious evidence of all these stages exists in the police records.

The result was often, though not always, a callous attitude towards the problems of the Indians. The sentiment expressed in the observation "I do not think it the right thing at any time to issue rations to Indians, it encourages them to be lazy," was widely shared by the police. Sometimes this attitude hardened into startling insensitivity. An example is an incident in which an Indian baby at York Factory was eaten by dogs that had been allowed to run

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1 Supt. Howard's report, 8 December 1915, Compt. Corr., v. 506.

loose. The comment of the police officer reporting the case was that "The accident has had a salutary effect upon these easy-going Indians," because it had taught them to keep their dogs tied up.[1]

It can be said with certainty that the police were generally not popular with the northern Indians. This unpopularity stemmed partly from the fact that the police, as the only government agents in many areas, had to bear the brunt of the Indians' dissatisfaction with government policy. Thus at York Factory in 1915, for example, the Indians were angry because the treaty promised them an annual visit by a doctor, and they had not seen one for two years. They were also dissatisfied because of what they considered neglect on the part of the police. The local chief petitioned the Department of Indian Affairs for an investigation: "I and my councillors . . . would like to have a visit of an Inspector of Indian Affairs . . . the present Indian agent, [and] the commanding officer of the R.N.W.M.Police, takes no interest in us, and we feel very much as if we were not wanted."[2] The chief had sensed the situation correctly; he was indeed not wanted. Never-

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1 Insp. W.J. Beyts' report, 2 January 1918, Compt. Corr., v. 527. This attitude was in striking contrast to that displayed when the victim was white. In September 1924 the wife of the N.C.O. in charge of the Chesterfield Inlet detachment was attacked by dogs and subsequently died. No silver linings were discovered in this tragedy.

2 Chief Charles Dastercoot to the Deputy Minister of Indian Affairs, 29 December 1915, Comm. Files, v. 58.

theless, as with all complaints about the police, an investigation was made, and a doctor eventually visited the Indians.

Another glimpse, perhaps more revealing, comes from Churchill. Supt. Starnes, in charge at Churchill in 1911, reported that the Indians of that region had their own name for the police; they called the police, in their own language, "the imprisoners."[1] This is not a bad translation of the word "police"--at least it is expressive of one facet of their work, but it is significant insofar as it shows how the Indians of one locality viewed the police--not as lawgivers, or protectors, but as "imprisoners."[2] Starnes believed that the Indians had been deliberately encouraged to look on the police as unfriendly, presumably by the traders. He thought that the police had made progress in overcoming the reluctance of the Indians to deal with them: "They are beginning to understand a little better what the aims of the Government, and the duties of the Police are towards them, and are less backward in approaching us."[3]

It must be kept in mind that the Indians under discussion here were as a rule less sophisticated than those living in the more southerly parts of Canada. Those around Hudson Bay had dealt with white men for generations, of

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1 Supt. Starnes' report, 4 December 1911, Compt. Corr., v. 402.

2 The name might have come from the fact that the police had a lock-up at Churchill. The government had sent up a steel cage, like a monkey cage in a zoo, for use as a cell.

3 Ibid.

course, but they had not been nearly as disoriented, christianized, civilized and educated as the Indians in, say, Ontario or Quebec. The Cree of Hudson Bay knew all about traders, and what to expect from them, but the police were a new phenomenon to them, and therefore confusing. It must have seemed to the Indians that the police had no sensible reason for being in their country. Unlike the missionaries they were not there specifically for the Indians' good; unlike the traders, they were not there for their own good. It should thus not be surprising if the police were to come under suspicion, even if they had had nothing but kind feelings towards the Indians. Since this was clearly not the case, a certain amount of hostility on the part of the Indians was inevitable.

This hostility did not provoke any open assaults by Indians on members of the R.N.W.M.P., for it was sullen rather than active. What it did produce was a lingering suspicion of the police and all their works. A good example comes from Churchill in the winter of 1917-1918. The police had gone there to give the Indians their annual treaty payments, an event which was generally well attended. On this occasion, however, the police on arriving at Churchill found that many Indians had not waited for them, but had gone inland to their hunting grounds. On investigation, it was found that the Indians had in fact fled from the police. A rumour had been started, possibly by the Métis, that the police were going to conscript all the Indians they could

catch into the army and send them overseas to fight.[1] That the Indians would believe such a story shows both their credulity and what they thought of the government and its agents.

There were a few criminal cases involving Indians--not many, though, for the Indians were generally "quiet and well behaved."[2] Serious crimes among them were infrequent enough to deserve individual mention in the annual reports; or perhaps it would be more correct to say serious crimes which came to the attention of the police--for no doubt many things went on in the bush that the police had no inkling of. In handling criminal cases involving Indians, the police tried to make a public example of the culprit, in order to discourage similar crimes. For instance, "Crazy Thomas," a councillor of the Churchill band of Chipewyans, who in 1913 had been debauching young girls and widows, was charged with common assault. He was held in jail for two days and then discharged on payment of a fine and costs.[3] The comment of the police on the incident was that "this case will have a very salutary effect on all natives in this locality, as they were not quite aware of the powers of the police. The two days that 'Crazy Thomas' spent in custody have had a very marked effect on

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1 Insp. Beyts' report, 2 January 1918, Compt. Corr., v. 527.
2 Supt. Howard's report, Port Nelson, 4 December 1914, Compt. Corr., v. 480.
3 Compt. Corr., v. 413; also R.N.W.M.P. Report 1913, A, p. 315.

him."[1] It was the example set rather than the actual punishment that the police believed to be important.

The modern reader will no doubt wish to know if the police and Indian women at these northern posts were involved in what a more genteel generation called "liaisons." It may be confidently asserted that they were, but documentary evidence is not easy to find, for unless a formal complaint was made, nothing was put on paper. It will also be remembered that the attitude of the police hierarchy was liberal in matters of this sort. In all the multitudinous records concerning the northern service of the police between 1900 and 1920, there are only two such complaints. In 1912 the Methodist missionary at Norway House complained that a police constable there was improperly involved with an Indian girl. An investigation was carried out, and it was found that the girl in question was not unhappy with the relationship. However, to save fuss and to placate the missionary, the constable was transferred to Regina, but was not otherwise punished.[2] The other incident, involving the cruise of the Arctic, is a bit clearer. Apparently complaints had been made to Sir Wilfrid Laurier that there had been incidents of immorality between the police on the Arctic expedition and the natives. White was

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1 Supt. F.J.A. Demers' report, 17 July 1913, R.N.W.M.P. Report 1913, IV, A, p. 315.

2 Correspondence relating to the case is in Compt. Corr., v. 455.

asked to investigate, and reported that Moodie had informed him that "there was no conspicuous immorality--nothing more than what always occurs between white men and native women in spite of all possible precautions."[1] What "precautions" were taken is unfortunately not mentioned. One would have to be naive in the extreme to doubt that this sort of thing was common in the north, but further comment on the subject would be speculative and therefore pointless.

In summary, then, it can be said that the relations between the police and the Indians of the northern frontier were generally peaceful but not cordial. The police took an unsentimental view of the Indian; they saw him in his squalor and hunger and disease, and they usually judged him lazy and inferior. They sometimes ascribed other causes to the Indians' misery, such as the bad influence of the traders, but they never tried to do much for Indians except to give them periodic hand-outs. And, after all, why should they have? They were not the Department of Indian Affairs. Although they did the work of that department in the Hudson Bay and Mackenzie Delta areas, they did so not by choice, or because they were trained to do so, but for the usual reason--because they were on the scene and would do the work for nothing. They were not social workers and never pretended to be humanitarians; they therefore reacted to the Indians just as might have been expected. The sins

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1 White to Laurier, 29 June 1906, Compt. Corr., v. 320.

of commission and omission in regard to the Indians were, as Jenness and others have recognized, not the fault of the police, but of the government.

The case of the Eskimos is remarkably different. One might reasonably expect the police to have lumped the Indians and Eskimos together, since both races were "natives," and to have assigned the same faults to both. Nothing could be further from the truth. To the surprise and evident delight of the police, they found that the Eskimos were not merely northern versions of the Indians. Wherever they came in contact with them--at Churchill, Fullerton, Herschel Island, Fort McPherson, and on patrol--the police found in the Eskimo a cheerful friend, rather than a sullen adversary. As one policeman put it, "The more you get acquainted with them, the better you like them."[1]

The reason given for this admiration was that the Eskimo had all the qualities the Indian lacked. He was "quickly learning the lessons of thriftiness, cleanliness, and morality" from the missionaries.[2] It was the marked contrast between the Indian and the Eskimo which so surprised the police, and which they remarked upon so fre-

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1 Cpl. J. Somers' report, Fort McPherson, 7 July 1911, Compt. Corr., v. 411.

2 Ibid. It might be mentioned here that Stefansson harshly condemned the missionaries for teaching cleanliness to the Mackenzie Eskimos. Apparently the Eskimos believed that washing one's face was an essential of Christianity; they therefore did so frequently, but never changed the water or the towel. The result was that disease spread faster than when they never washed at all. See My Life With the Eskimo, p. 374.

quently. Insp. F.J. Fitzgerald, commenting on his trip down the Mackenzie to Fort McPherson in 1910, said of the Eskimos: "it was a pleasure to see their pleasant faces, after the sulky looks of the Indians. All the Eskimo had good clean clothes and looked far superior to the Indians in their dirty rags."[1] Insp. G.L. Jennings commented earlier in the same year that "The Eskimo as a race are the most interesting of any I have seen. They are quick to learn, good manual workers, hospitable in the extreme, and are in almost every way the direct opposite of an Indian."[2] Supt. Moodie, speaking of the Eskimos at Fullerton in 1903, reported that "In intellect and quickness in picking up ideas the Esquimaux are in advance of the ordinary Indians."[3] Insp. A.M. Jarvis, writing in 1908, compared the Indians and Eskimos of the Mackenzie Delta:

> The Indians here, they are too lazy to hunt or trap and live all the year on fish . . . any money or debt they can procure goes on their backs, and then their stomach is thought of. Differant with the Esquimaux; one need only go 100 miles down the Mackenzie River, and he will find the men either out trapping, or fishing through the ice. The women are either making skin boots or clothing, or smoking cigaretts and laughing . . . They are not improvident like the Indians. They very seldom take debt, [but if they do]. . . the first thing they do is to come in with the furs to pay what they owe . . .[4]

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1 Insp. Fitzgerald's report, 14 December 1910, Compt. Corr., v. 383.
2 Insp. Jennings' report, 16 February 1910, R.N.W.M.P. Report 1910, K, p. 152.
3 Moodie to White, 8 December 1903, Compt. Corr., v. 281.
4 Insp. Jarvis' report, 12 February 1908, Compt. Corr., v. 353.

Why this difference in attitude? The Eskimos as a race had been in contact with Europeans for a far shorter period of time than had the Indians, and their culture had taken much less buffeting; they were therefore more secure in their ways than were the Indians. Some of the things the police liked--the Eskimos' hospitality to strangers, for instance--were simply integral parts of their culture. The survival of the Eskimo race required that its members be generous and hospitable; this was not true to the same extent of Indians. The police were also pleased to find that Eskimo commercial and acquisitive values coincided more or less with the white man's. They could not be fobbed off with shoddy goods, as the Indians often were, and they were far more conscientious about settling their debts.[1]

Because they liked the Eskimos, and because they realized how little contact they had had with European culture, the police adopted some quite liberal views about how to deal with them. From the first the police maintained an open mind on how to approach this new race. Supt. Moodie, the first police officer to establish contact with the Hudson Bay Eskimos, had very enlightened opinions on how they should be introduced to Canadian laws. Referring to a murder which had taken place among the Eskimos at Fuller-

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1 The case of the Indians who carried goods over the Yukon passes seems to be an exception, for they were shrewd businessmen (as were Pacific coast Indians generally), and most energetic in earning money.

ton a few years before the arrival of the police, Moodie said that he did not want to punish any Eskimo who acted in ignorance of the law. "All superstitions have to be handled gently," he wrote, "and it is worse than useless to attempt to upset old customs in a day. It is a matter of time to change these, and it can only be done by first obtaining the goodwill and confidence of the natives."[1] This may be taken as a concise statement of the police attitude towards the Eskimos, for it was the policy they followed consistently throughout almost the entire period covered by this study.

Moodie's comments on the unfair prices given the Eskimos for their furs and whalebone have already been mentioned in another context. He did not content himself by condemning the traders, however, for he had a positive system in mind to replace the existing bad one. He thought that the regime that prevailed among the Eskimos of Greenland, in which all trading was conducted by the government for the benefit of the natives and freebooters were excluded, would do very well in Canada.[2] Moodie's opinion is shared by Diamond Jenness, who later came to much the same conclusion.[3]

As far as "civilizing" the Eskimos was concerned, members of the police often expressed the opinion that they

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1 R.N.W.M.P. Report 1904, IV, p. 8.
2 Ibid., p. 10.
3 Jenness, op. cit., p. 20.

were better left uneducated and un-Christianized. As one officer put it, the Eskimos "do not require to be educated, and will be far better left alone to their aboriginal life"--that education would only train the girls for domestic service, and boys for manual labour, which was no progress at all.[1] There were two schools of thought on the question of whether the Eskimo should be educated or left alone, which latter course was feasible because it seemed that the north would never attract large numbers of white men. Vilhjalmur Stefansson would have liked to have seen the Eskimo left undisturbed. As he said, "I am so great an admirer of the Eskimo before civilization changed them that it is not easy to get me to say that civilization has improved them in any material way."[2]

However, this was probably a minority view, owing to the obvious fact that the Eskimos had been changed by civilization and still were being changed. The Eskimos would need to be educated, if only in self-defence. This was the point made by Diamond Jenness when he compared the Canadian and American approach to the Eskimos. The Americans, he pointed out,

> had dotted the coast [of Alaska] not with needless police posts, but with government schools, believing that the only policy consonant with the dignity of the United States was to educate and train her Eskimo wards until they could be wholly absorbed into the social and economic life of the nation. [3]

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1 Insp. Jennings' report, 8 October 1910, Compt. Corr., v. 383; also R.N.W.M.P. Report 1910, O, p. 184.

2 My Life With the Eskimo, p. 430.

3 Op. cit., p. 20.

The police were aware of this aspect of the problem. Even Insp. Jennings, who was opposed to education of any kind for the Eskimos, is also on record as considering "a government school similar to those in Alaska an urgent necessity."[1] He believed that it was essential that the Eskimos "should learn English, and the values of trade, if only for their own protection. They themselves are most anxious for this."[2] This contradiction reenforces all the more the strong concern of the police for the welfare of the Eskimos. They had a genuine desire to see the government and others do what was best for them. They did not look upon the Eskimos as nuisances or as failures, but as wards, to be protected and encouraged as much as possible. There was much confusion as to what was best for the Eskimos, but there can be no doubt that the police wished them well. This is in marked contrast to their indifferent attitude towards the Indians.

Sometimes police enthusiasm for the Eskimos had unfortunate results, for the assistance given to them was not always in their best interests. An example can be found at Fullerton, in 1905. Supt. Moodie was apparently a member of the school of thought which believed the igloo a cold and drafty place, and pitied the Eskimo who had to live in one--a belief which was anathema to Stefansson. Moodie

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1 Insp. Jennings' report, 16 February 1910, R.N.W.M.P. Report 1910, K, p. 152.

2 Ibid.

reported with pride that one of the Eskimos employed by the police at Fullerton had begun to live in a house:

> Scottie . . . has a small shack made of rough boards and tarpaper, and with a stove in it. I can assure you he appreciates thoroughly the warmth and comfort of such a place, humble as it is. It is my intention to erect similar shacks at each post for all employed natives. Realizing the comfort of such will do more to civilize these people than all the preaching in the world unaccompanied by care of the body also. [1]

Although well-meaning, this is just the sort of action which bound the Eskimo to the white man's culture. The Eskimo became disdainful of his old ways. But the shack was hard to heat, unsanitary (because unlike an igloo it was permanent), and bred disease, particularly tuberculosis. Moodie also suggested that a small building be put up to serve as a native hospital, to be staffed by native women in lieu of nurses; this of course was never done. The policeman believed that he was doing the Eskimo a great favour when he gave him enough discarded materials to build a small shack. It was the first step in his "civilization." The wisdom of the step has been hotly debated by many "experts" on the Eskimo; from Stefansson to Farley Mowat there have been almost as many shades of opinion about the question of putting Eskimos in houses as there have been writers. Stefansson abhorred the practice, seeing it as a step in the dissolution of Eskimo culture. Farley Mowat

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1 Supt. Moodie's report, 30 December 1905, R.N.W.M.P. Report 1905, IV, p. 14.

believes that there is no other choice for the Eskimo if he wants to survive.[1] The topic is open to endless discussion, but the police did not operate on a philosophical level. They thought in 1905 that they were doing the Eskimos a favour by putting them in shacks, and did not worry about the implications of such action.

In the years before 1920, the police rarely had to fulfil their primary function--that of acting as policemen--when dealing with the Eskimos. When they did act in a police capacity, it was likely to involve not the investigation of a crime, but the settlement of what was essentially a purely Eskimo dispute. A typical example comes from Herschel Island in 1909. An Eskimo and his wife had died from eating bad whale meat, and the family boat, as was apparently the custom, was claimed by the wife's father. A quarrel arose over the boat, and Insp. Jennings was asked to adjudicate:

> I explained the law to them and gave the whaleboat to Varwuk [the man's father] , Ilyaki, though not liking to give up the boat in the presence of his people, did so at once, and the Esquimaux were all pleased at the outcome. These people have implicit faith in the Mounted Police, and it is a pleasure to deal with them. I find that they are very anxious to live according to the law of the white man.[2]

The Eskimos generally accepted the white man's customs, however odd, without question, and his laws, as interpreted by the police, were no exception. The Eskimos were genuinely

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1 Farley Mowat, The Desperate People, pp. 290-292. He quotes approvingly an article by R.A.J. Phillips of the Department of Northern Affairs to this effect.

2 Insp. Jennings' report, 1 August 1909, Compt. Corr., v. 383.

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2 Insp. Jennings' report, 1 August 1909, Compt. Corr., v. 383.

friendly and anxious to please, and they also no doubt felt that the decrees of the police, like those of the missionaries, were powerful magic and should be followed to the letter.

The police as a rule tried to deal with the Eskimos in terms that they could understand; that is, they tried to make justice a concrete rather than an abstract idea. This is why Eskimos were rarely put in jail during this period. The idea of confinement as punishment was too foreign to the Eskimo mind. Instead, on occasion, the police followed their old habit of "making up the laws as they go along," and invented punishments that fit the crimes. A good example is one of the infrequent instances in which Eskimos stole from whites. In the summer of 1916, a family of Eskimos stole a case of pemmican from the Canadian Arctic Expedition at Bernard Harbour, and headed east. A police corporal, who was staying with the expedition at the time, set out in pursuit, and soon caught up with the thieves. Rather than arrest the Eskimo for theft, which would have involved endless bother, the corporal invoked the lex talonis, and demanded that the thief make restitution for the stolen pemmican. The Eskimo offered a seal pup in payment, but the corporal refused it, and took instead two boxes of cartridges. These were the Eskimo's most valuable possessions, and he protested, but to no avail. As the corporal later reported, "Something had to be done, however, to show these people that they could not steal

with impunity."[1] This was an irregular method of enforcing the law, but it was justice that an Eskimo could readily understand, once he had accepted the white man's concept of private property.

It is important to remember in discussing the Eskimos during this period, that different groups were at different levels of "civilization," or more correctly, that some had been more influenced by the white man than others. In 1910, there were Eskimos at Herschel Island who had been in constant contact with white civilization for more than twenty years. At the same time, there were Eskimos, notably in the area south of Coronation Gulf, who had never seen a white man. Some Eskimos were therefore strong in their traditional ways, while others were very dependent on the generosity of whites.

By 1910 the situation which had been predicted for several years had come to pass in the western Arctic. The whalers no longer came north, and the Eskimos, who by then relied on them for the employment which brought white man's food, now found themselves without the flour, tea, and sugar which they had come to depend upon. Their situation, while not as bad as that of the Indians, was beginning to sound ominously familiar:

> I visited all the natives on the island . . . issued some of them flour and bacon, and then tried to give them a square meal about once a week. There was 47 natives on the island and it was impossible to try

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1 Cpl. W.V. Bruce's report, 23 June 1916, Comm. Files, v. 58.

> and feed them from our supplies . . . but we filled their stomachs now and then . . . they had to eat a number of their seal skins . . . One family had to eat their dogs . . . It was very hard on the children, they could not go the seal skin and the seal oil. From now on they will pull through alright and there was no deaths from starvation. 1

What happened to the Eskimos at Herschel Island in 1909 was a foretaste of the fate that befell most of the Eskimos in the Canadian Arctic over the next forty years. The police were to find themselves more and more in the same relationship to the Eskimos as they were to the Indians--dispensers of meagre relief to starving, demoralized natives.

Although this trend would seem to be clearly apparent by 1910, it did not become really serious until after 1920. Before then, the Eskimos throughout most of the Arctic remained cheerful and self-reliant. This self-reliance was an important reason why the police thought so much more highly of the Eskimos than of the Indians. Almost everywhere the police came into contact with the Indians, it was on the white man's terms. On the prairies the Indian's civilization had been defeated by the farmer, and in the north the white trapper was beginning to encroach on their territory; in many places they had been reduced to dependence and beggary. But when the police met the Eskimos, it was on the Eskimos' home ground, and, at least in the beginning, on the Eskimos' terms. The policeman who could cross the prairie by train or automobile, or go down the

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1 S/Sgt. Fitzgerald's report, 16 May 1909, Compt. Corr., v. 372.

Mackenzie could feel superior to the Indians on foot or in a canoe. But it was difficult for the police, faced with conditions in the Arctic, to feel superior to the Eskimo. The Eskimo was perfectly adapted to his environment. He had invented the igloo and the sled, the two essentials of Arctic travel. If the police wanted to venture away from their detachments and live to return, they had to adopt the Eskimo method of travel. Not until well after 1920, when the aeroplane was introduced to the Arctic, did the police have anything better.

Thus the police were in debt to the Eskimos for much of their knowledge of Arctic travel and survival. Realization of this fact was bound to create an attitude of admiration and respect. Even if the police considered the Eskimos to be children intellectually, they were forced to respect them for their skills, and to admire their code of behaviour. Such was not the case with the Indians, and this in a large measure explains the different attitude on the part of the police towards the two races.

This attitude of the police towards the Eskimos underwent a perceptible change during and after the first World War, particularly as a result of a series of murders, two of which have already been mentioned. Everyone seemed to agree that the Eskimos who murdered Radford and Street could not be held accountable for their actions, but in the Rouvière-Le Roux case opinion was divided. The two Eskimos accused of this crime were brought to trial in

Edmonton in the summer of 1917, but to the amazement and chagrin of the police, they were acquitted of the charge of murdering Father Le Roux. Insp. C.D. La Nauze, who had arrested the two, wrote indignantly to the Commissioner:

> There seems to have been a campaign of public sympathy for the "poor Eskimo" and the public seem to be on the side of the defence. . . . we are hoping for a conviction of the two murderers on the second charge . . . If both murderers are found "not guilty" we have nothing to do but send them back FREE MEN to their own land to let their tribe know that NO PUNISHMENT will be meted out to those who murder white men. 1

La Nauze was not alone in his indignation; Bishop G. Breynat, who did not believe that his priests had given offence to the Eskimos, quoted in his memoirs a letter which attributed the acquittal to anti-Catholic prejudice:

> Pour eux [the public], les Esquimeaux étaient des braves gens, les meurtriers, presque des héros; la responsabilité du crime pesait presque sur ces "papistes" qui étaient venus les troubler dans leur primitive innocence! Je ne puis chasser de mon esprit la répugnante image d'un individu que je vis, au milieu de beaucoup d'autres: il fouillait ses poches, en tirait des cigarettes et, les offrant aux meurtriers, disait "Jump in again." 2

They need not have worried. The Eskimos were taken to Calgary, tried, and found guilty of murdering Father Rouvière. The judge told the bored and uncomprehending Eskimos, dozing in the August heat, that the "great White chief" had decided to be kind to them: "Because they did not know our ways . . . he will not have them put to death . . . for the future they now know what the law is . . .

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1 La Nauze to Perry, 18 August 1917, Compt. Corr., v. 580.
2 Letter from Père P. Fallaize to Breynat, n.d., in Breynat, op. cit., II, p. 327.

they must let their people know."[1] The sentence of death was commuted to life imprisonment at the police detachment at Fort Resolution, but after two years the men were freed and taken back to their people. Commissioner Perry hoped that they would "no doubt have a salutary influence on their tribe as they will be able to inform them of the power and justice of the government."[2] In fact, the lesson learned was that crime paid, for the two Eskimos became favourites of the police at Fort Resolution. They made themselves useful around the detachment, and they were employed as drivers when the Tree River detachment was set up in 1919. By the time they returned home they had acquired enough "style," money, and cast-off goods to make them the richest men among their people. Later one was killed by his band, apparently because of his arrogance. The Rouvière-Le Roux case marks the end of a phase in the police attitude towards the Eskimo--an age of innocence in which the Eskimos were objects of wonder, almost of delight. After this time, one finds the occasional derogatory reference to Eskimos; they were "born thieves and liars . . . any one of them would sell his soul to possess a rifle."[3] The

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1 Comm. Files, v. 59.
2 R.C.M.P. Report 1919, p. 15.
3 Insp. F.H. French to Perry, n.d. (probably 1919), Comm. Files, v. 60.

incident that really aroused the police, however, was the murder of one of their own men, Cpl. W.A. Doak, who was shot by an Eskimo prisoner at the Tree River detachment in April 1922. This was a very different matter than the murder of explorers or priests, and no proposals were forthcoming from the force to handle the killer gently or respect his superstitions in this case.

The case of Alikomiak and Tatamigana, the two men who eventually received a death sentence,[1] is illustrative of the debate between those who still considered the Eskimos to be primitive innocents who had to be tutored as children, and those on the other hand who saw them as primitive, dangerous savages who had to be inspired with the fear of the white man's justice. In this case the trial was held in the north; a judicial party went to Herschel Island in the summer of 1923, but the government attitude was set on punishment before the trial began. The lawyer appointed for the defence, T.L. Cory,[2] had suggested the previous autumn that mercy was wasted on the Eskimos: "as kindness has failed in the past I strongly recommed that the law should take its course and those Eskimos found guilty of murder should be hanged in a place where the

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1 No fewer than five Eskimos were tried at Herschel Island for various killings in July 1923. See R.C.M.P Report 1923.

2 Solicitor for the Northwest Territories office and son of the Deputy Minister of the Department of the Interior.

natives will see and recognize the outcome of taking another's life."[1] One may assume that Cory did not defend the accused Eskimos very vigorously. Commissioner Cortlandt Starnes of the R.C.M.P. had similar opinions. He observed in a letter to the Department of the Interior that "Kind and generous treatment of the Natives who have committed murders in the past has apparently had the opposite effect to that intended, and I am afraid there is a danger of the Natives concluding that crime is a thing to be rewarded by the White man."[2] This situation was partly the fault of the police. Convicted Eskimos had traditionally been sentenced to terms of imprisonment at northern posts, where they were treated more like mascots than criminals.[3] Now the policy of the police and the government turned from kindness to sternness, though the attitude towards the individual Eskimo continued to be friendly.

The two Eskimos were hanged at Herschel Island on February 1st 1924, after a protracted debate in the press whether or not clemency should be shown to them. Some newspapers[4] asked the government to show mercy, on the

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1 T.L. Cory to O.S. Finnie (Director, Northwest Territories Branch of the Department of the Interior), 12 September 1922, Int. NAB, v. 607, f. 2580.
2 Starnes to Finnie, 14 August 1922, ibid.
3 Cpl. Doak had given Alikomiak the run of the detachment, and had been shot while sleeping.
4 Guelph Mercury, 25 October 1923; London Advertiser, 26 October 1923.

grounds that the Eskimos had not been properly educated in Canadian law, and should not be punished for their ignorance.[1] Others believed that any trial held at Herschel Island would not be fair, and that the peculiar circumstances of the case warranted mercy.[2] On the other hand, it was felt in some quarters that "Human life is precious--even the lives of these two Eskimo savages; but the public welfare is of more importance."[3] Other newspaper comment ranged from the melodramatic ("the gallows yawns on the already ice-locked shores of the Arctic, and in many an igloo this winter will be discussed the white man's law"),[4] to a sensible suggestion from the Toronto Star:

> It is up to the parliament of Canada to see whether the "foreign" policy of the government in regard to these people is coherent and reasonable, whether there is any thought-out policy, or merely a "mandate" to the police to run things the best they know how.[5]

The Star had put its finger on the great fault in government Eskimo policy--that it had no policy, and that it had

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1 Toronto Globe, 24 October 1923.
2 The man who murdered Cpl. Doak was already under arrest for the murder of Otto Binder, of the Hudson's Bay Company. Binder had apparently appropriated the wife of the man who killed him. It was also reported, and denied by the government, that one of the accused was only sixteen years of age and of subnormal intelligence.
3 Hamilton Herald, 24 October 1923.
4 Ottawa Citizen, 22 October 1923.
5 Toronto Star, 6 November 1923.

given the police carte blanche to do the best they could for these people. It was reported in the press that before the two men were hanged, they had said that "the police had long been enemies of their people."[1] Though this was not true, there is no doubt that by 1924 relations between the police and the Eskimos in general had altered. In particular, the police no longer thought of the Eskimos primarily as lovable children, but now also took into account, realistically, the darker, more dangerous side of their character.

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1 Toronto Globe, 1 March 1924.

CHAPTER XII

ULTIMA THULE

The year 1919 was in several ways a turning point in the history of the Mounted Police. It was the year in which Parliament by statute changed the name of the force to the Royal Canadian Mounted Police.[1] In February of the next year the headquarters of the police was moved from Regina to Ottawa. In general, the role of the police was changing, as the new R.C.M.P. became less a force of the prairie and the frontier, and more a force concerned with the sophisticated problems of an increasingly urbanized nation.[2] The Winnipeg general strike of 1919, in which the police were pitted not against outlaws or Indians, but against putative Bolsheviks, is indicative of this change.

There was however one new frontier left to challenge the police in the period following the end of the first World War. This was the far north--the most remote parts of the Canadian mainland and the Arctic archipelago. During the 1920's the R.C.M.P. extended its operations over the

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1 10 Geo. V, c. 28, s. 1.

2 This is true in the sense that the police were becoming increasingly involved with the regulation of narcotics, national security, and so forth. Actually, the proportion of the force in the north increased in the 1920's. In 1920 the police numbered 1,532, of whom 27 were on service in the Northwest Territories and Hudson Bay; in 1926 the figures were 69 out of 876. R.C.M.P. Report 1926, p. 6.

last remaining areas of the inhabited Canadian north, and over some of the areas too far north to support even an Eskimo population. In these regions the political aspect of the police was paramount, for their main task was to establish a "presence" in the interests of Canadian sovereignty rather than to carry out regular police duties. This episode in the history of the police and the northern frontier illustrates the final stage in their pioneering work there; it also provides an excellent example of the way in which the Canadian government determined its northern policy in this period and put it into practice.

In 1895, by order in council, Canada had claimed the Arctic archipelago as far north as 83¼° north latitude,[1] but before 1920 she had been far from energetic in prosecuting her claims. True, A.P. Low had reached Ellesmere Island in 1904, and in 1909 Captain J.E. Bernier had landed on Melville Island and claimed the entire archipelago for Canada, extending her claims to the Pole in the wedge-shaped sector which appears on some maps today.[2] But as one student of the period has put it:

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1 Statutes of Canada, 1896, pp. xlvii-xlix.

2 J.E. Bernier, Report on the Dominion of Canada government expedition to the Arctic islands and Hudson Strait on board the D.G.S. "Arctic", (Ottawa, 1910). The "sector theory" has never been formally adopted by Canada; this would involve passing a statute. See G.W. Smith, "Sovereignty in the North: the Canadian Aspect of an International Problem," in R. St.J. MacDonald, ed., The Arctic Frontier, (Toronto, 1966), for a good discussion of the question of Arctic sovereignty, and of the sector theory in particular.

> Canada was content to permit the residual Northwest Territories to remain a deserted and forgotten national attic. The government might be striving to extend that attic to the North Pole, but it had no intention of furnishing it with meaningful government if the expense could be avoided. [1]

The trouble was not only the government's "unfortunate parsimony,"[2] but that it had more pressing matters to attend to. But the result was that nothing more than gestures of sovereignty, and fleeting ones at that--Bernier's expedition of 1909 being an example--were made until a foreign country showed interest in the Canadian Arctic. Then, as Stefansson remarked, interest was kindled in Ottawa, "for it is human nature to want whatever someone else wants. The Government actually began to spend money."[3] The "someone else" in this case was Denmark, and the motive was ovibos moschatus--the musk-ox.

Concern had been expressed in Canada as early as the turn of the century that the musk-ox was in danger of becoming extinct. Inspector J.D. Moodie had warned in 1904 that the traders in Hudson Bay were encouraging the Eskimos to slaughter the animals, and had prohibited the practice in his immediate area.[4] Yet although all members of the police had in 1903 been given the power to try game offences summarily,[5] it was not until the new Northwest Game Act of

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1 J.A. Bovey, "The Attitudes and Policies of the Federal Government towards Canada's Northern Territories, 1870-1930," M.A. thesis, University of British Columbia, 1967, p. iv.

2 Ibid., p. 57.

3 The Adventure of Wrangel Island, (New York, 1925), p. 71.

4 See chapter VII.

5 2 Ed. VII, c. 12, s. 2.

1917 that musk-oxen were protected completely by law; after that year they could be shot only for scientific purposes, by special licence. Further government interest in these animals manifested itself in the establishment in 1919 of the Reindeer and Musk-ox Commission, which investigated their economic as well as their biological potential.[1]

There was one group of hunters who did not, however, come under Canadian control. These were Eskimos from the northwest coast of Greenland, around Thule, who regularly crossed Smith Sound to hunt musk-ox on central Ellesmere Island, which was in 1920 quite outside the sphere of effective Canadian control. In 1910 a trading post had been established at Thule[2] by Knud Rasmussen, a Dane who combined the energy of a Stefansson with the insight into Eskimo affairs of a Diamond Jenness. Rasmussen was a sort of father-figure to the Eskimos of Thule, and was also the semi-official representative of the Danish government, which did not proclaim its sovereignty over North Greenland until 1921.[3]

On July 31st 1919,[4] while the Reindeer and Musk-ox

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1 Report of the Royal Commission to Investigate the Possibilities of the Reindeer and Musk-ox Industries in the Arctic and sub-Arctic Regions of Canada, (Ottawa, 1922).

2 P.D. Baird, The Polar World, (London, 1964), p. 174.

3 Ibid.

4 The chronology of these events is given in an undated memo of the Advisory Technical Board, in the J.B. Harkin Papers, v. 1. Harkin was the Commissioner of Dominion Parks in the Department of the Interior, and was the civil servant primarily concerned with Arctic sovereignty in this period.

Commission was beginning its work, the Canadian government sent a request to Denmark (through the British government), asking the Danes to restrain the Eskimos of Thule from killing musk-oxen on Ellesmere Island. The Danish government put the matter to Rasmussen, who was neither a lawyer nor a diplomat; his reply contained this ominous sentence:

> As everyone knows, the land of the Polar Eskimos falls under what is called "No Man's Land" and there is, therefore, no authority in this country except that which I myself am able to exert through the Trading Station. [1]

The Danish government, in its reply to the Canadian government of April 20th, 1920, said that it could "subscribe to what Mr. Rasmussen says."[2] In fact it was questionable whether the Eskimos' aboriginal hunting rights were affected by Canada's sovereignty claims, especially since there was no governmental authority of any kind in the area.

While the government hastened to protest to the Danes that Ellesmere Island was not a "no man's land,"[3] the civil servants concerned with the matter were privately worried. A confidential memorandum prepared for the Department of the Interior suggested that Canada's title to Ellesmere Island was by no means certain, since much of the island had been neither discovered nor occupied by British subjects--only claimed, from a distance, for the British Crown:

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1 Cited in a copy of a letter from Rasmussen to Stefansson, 11 May 1920, Harkin Papers, v. 1.
2 G.W. Smith, op. cit., p. 208.
3 Governor-General to the Secretary of State for the Colonies, 13 July 1920, Harkin Papers, v. 1.

> The situation as to sovereignty in the northern islands, therefore, appears to be that Britain has had an inchoate title which now probably through the lapse of time may be considered to have terminated; that the Low and Bernier expeditions may have established a "fictitious" title which also has probably lapsed; and therefore, that apparently Denmark or any other country is in a position to acquired sovereignty by establishing effective occupation and administration. [1]

The next question was, as J.B. Harkin put it, whether Ellesmere and the other islands were worth bothering about. "Do we want them, or do we not?" he asked. "Apparently if we want them we have to do something to establish our title." [2] At a meeting of experts on the north, including Stefansson, it was decided that Canada ought to assert its authority over Ellesmere Island for two reasons. First, the island might be worth something--the analogy of Alaska was suggested. But the most important consideration was a "sentimental" one: "Ellesmere and the other northern islands have always been regarded in Canada as Canadian, and there doubtless would be a strong sentiment against their being taken possession of by any other flag." [3] The government did not want to leave itself open to accusations of letting the Arctic go by default.

How was sovereignty to be established? J.B. Harkin had suggested that a number of Eskimos could be moved from Fullerton, where food supplies were failing, to Ellesmere,

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1 Memo, n.a., n.d., Harkin Papers, v. 1.
2 Minutes of a special meeting of the Advisory Technical Board, 1 October 1920, ibid.
3 Memo, n.a.,n.d. (probably October 1920), "Title to Northern Islands," ibid. These memos were prepared for the Deputy Minister of the Interior.

where a couple of police constables could protect them and the musk-ox as well.[1] Stefansson enthusiastically supported the idea of sending the Mounted Police to Ellesmere Island, and said that at least two detachments should be established there, because if the police were to stay at the south end of the island, the Danes might well claim the north end anyway.[2] After some discussion, both ideas were adopted, and on October 27th 1920, the advisory board recommended to W.W. Cory, Deputy Minister of the Interior,[3] that three permanent posts be set up by the police on Ellesmere Island, that some Eskimos be transferred to the island, and that the Hudson's Bay Company or some other trader be encouraged to extend operations to the area.[4] At the same time, the suggestion made by A.P. Low in 1903 was adopted; in the summer of 1920 an R.C.M.P. detachment was set up at Port Burwell, the gateway to Hudson Strait and Bay. The two policemen involved lived with the Moravian missionaries the

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1 Harkin to W.W. Cory, 14 June 1920, Harkin Papers, v. 1.

2 Ibid. Stefansson also wanted the R.C.M.P. to establish a post on the southeast coast of Wrangel Island, north of Siberia, another area of the Arctic he considered ripe for the assertion of Canadian sovereignty because of its occupation for a time by members of the Canadian Arctic Expedition. See R.J. Diubaldo, "Wrangling over Wrangel Island," Canadian Historical Review, v. XLVIII, no. 3, September 1967.

3 He succeeded Frederick White as Commissioner of the North-west Territories in 1919, and held that post until 1931.

4 "Title to Northern Islands." The first trading post on Ellesmere Island was not set up until 1953, when the government opened one at Craig Harbour. See P.J. Usher, Fur Trade Posts of the Northwest Territories, 1870-1970, (Ottawa, 1971), p. 133.

first year, patrolled to the Eskimo camps, and checked the navigation markers at Button Island and Cape Chidley.[1]

The next step was to include the police in planning the Ellesmere Island expedition. Assistant Commissioner Cortlandt Starnes was telephoned and asked to estimate the cost of establishing these three detachments, plus two more on Devon and on Bylot Islands. He reported a cost of $45,000 for two years, not including the expense of transportation.[2] The decision was then made to go ahead with the expedition in the summer of 1921.

In fact, no posts were set up until the summer of 1922; the reason for this delay, although it had nothing to do with the police, is an interesting example of the government's hesitant, rather devious approach to the actual implementation of its policy. There were a few bold spirits in the government; Loring Christie of External Affairs advised Prime Minister Meighen that Denmark would give no trouble if Canada acted firmly, since it would be expensive and troublesome for her to dispute Canada's claims once the Mounted Police were on the ground.[3] One enthusiast suggested that the police could travel to Ellesmere Island

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1 R.C.M.P. Report 1920, pp. 23-24.
2 Memo to Harkin from (illegible), 8 November 1920, Harkin Papers, v. 1.
3 Christie to Meighen, February 1921, copy in ibid.

by dirigible from the Imperial Air Station in Scotland in the middle of the winter of 1920-21 in case of a sudden move by the Danes.[1] In general, however, the official attitude was one of caution. J.B. Harkin, who co-ordinated the planning for the expedition, wanted its purpose to be secret from the outset, chiefly to forestall possible rival expeditions from Denmark or the United States, which latter country, by virtue of the work of Greely and Peary, might also feel it should assert some claim to Ellesmere Island. Harkin suggested to the Deputy Minister of the Interior that the public be told the expedition had to do with reindeer; this would be "good camouflage" as far as the Americans were concerned, because Stefansson had paved the way for such an idea with his "propaganda" about the animals.[2] Stefansson, who had at times manipulated others for his own ends,[3] now became a stalking-horse for the Canadian government. With the approval of his minister, Harkin told Stefansson that the Canadian government was considering another scientific expedition to the Beaufort Sea, and suggested he might like to command it. Stefansson jumped at the chance and began to make preparations.

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1 Memo, Advisory Technical Board, n.d., ibid.
2 Harkin to W.W. Cory, 6 December 1920, ibid.
3 See R.J. Diubaldo, "The Canadian Career of Vilhjalmur Stefansson," unpublished PhD. thesis, University of Western Ontario, 1972.

The true purpose of the Beaufort Sea expedition, however, was not exploration, but to prevent Stefansson, who had been a member of the committee planning the Ellesmere Island project, from revealing the government's true intentions to the Danes or the Americans. Harkin warned Cory, "I feel quite sure that entirely apart from the Denmark danger Stefansson could very readily convince the United States to send an expedition to Ellesmere Land. That country has probably a better title at present . . . than Canada has."[1] Harkin felt that this expedition should actually go ahead, although it would cost $100,000, for the "sop to Stefansson's pride and selfishness" was not "too high for the assurance it gives us."[2] It would be "unwise to bank on his Canadian loyalty too much," but he could be kept in line through self-interest.[3] To complicate the matter, some members of the government were suggesting that Sir Ernest Shackleton rather than Stefansson should command the Beaufort expedition.[4] The immediate result of all this chicanery was that both plans fell through, and no expedition was sent north in 1921.

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1 2 March 1921, Harkin Papers, v. 1.
2 Harkin to Cory, 15 March 1921, ibid.
3 Harkin to Cory, 2 March 1921, ibid. This correspondence also appears in the Department of the Interior Papers, Northwest Territories and Yukon Branch, PAC, RG 15, A-2, v. 1.
4 R.J. Diubaldo, "Wrangling over Wrangel Island," p. 208.

Stefansson was understandably angry, and it was reported to Harkin that in the summer of 1921 he had given interviews to American newspapers about a proposed expedition to "islands and country lying north of Canada" [1] --just the result those who felt there was nothing "north of Canada" had feared. Harkin trembled to think of the public reaction if the worst should come to pass:

> One has but to recall the outburst of public indignation and protest in Canada at the decision of the Alaskan arbitration to realize what public opinion would be if any neglect on the Government's part resulted in the loss of an area thousands of times larger and more important than was involved in the Alaskan case. [2]

Harkin was apparently motivated in part by fear of becoming a latter-day Lord Alverstone. Having abandoned stealth, he quickly made preparations to send a real expedition north in the summer of 1922.

The 1922 expedition, which took the police farther north than ever before, was under the command of J.D. Craig, the Advisory Engineer for the Northwest Territories Branch of the Department of the Interior. [3] As far as the R.C.M.P was concerned, the scope of the expedition had diminished, for only two detachments were to be established, one at Pond Inlet, [4] and one somewhere on the east coast of Elles-

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1 Harkin Papers, v. 1.
2 Harkin to Cory, 26 May 1921, ibid.
3 His papers from this period are in PAC, MG 30, C-65.
4 Generally called "Pond's Inlet" in this period.

mere Island, the actual site to be determined by Craig himself.[1] The government refurbished the old Arctic for the voyage, and to command the ship called on the imperishable veteran, Captain J.E. Bernier. The voyage was without serious incident. A detachment was set up at Craig Harbour, at the extreme south-east corner of Ellesmere Island, on August 28th 1922, and on the return to the south a second post was established at Pond Inlet. Craig Harbour was commanded by Inspector C.E. Wilcox, and Pond Inlet by S/Sgt. A.H. Joy; each detachment had two constables and one or more Eskimo families, hired at Etah, Greenland--Peary's former base. In contrast with the Hudson Bay expedition of 1903, in which there was some squabbling between the police and the other members of the crew, the 1922 voyage saw nothing but harmony, possibly because it was chiefly a police venture, whereas the earlier one had an important scientific purpose, and interests and personalities had clashed over the division of authority. At Craig Harbour, Wilcox and Craig exchanged warm personal letters,[2] and Captain Bernier gave a speech to the police advising them on how to survive the physical and psychological challenges of the winter--be sure to pack snow around the buildings

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1 He wanted to put it at Fram Fiord (76°29' N., 81°15' W.), but found it unapproachable. He then chose a harbour nearby to which he gave his own name.

2 Craig to Wilcox, 27 August 1922; Wilcox to Craig, 28 August 1922, Int. NAB, v. 582, f. 567.

in November, he said, and "do not make a hill out of a mountain" in personal relations.[1] When the Arctic returned south at the end of the summer, the Canadian press welcomed the expedition as a demonstration of Canada's rights: "Canada's Northern Empire Within 850 Miles of North Pole, Making our Sovereignty Certain," reported the Ottawa Journal.[2] In fact the Canadian government did not feel entirely certain until it settled Otto Sverdrup's claims eight years later,[3] but the expedition was a large step in the right direction.

Pond Inlet, the other detachment set up in the summer of 1922, was to serve a somewhat different purpose, since Canada's claim to Baffin Island had never been questioned. Pond Inlet was established simply to provide police supervision over an area which seemed to be in need of it. As

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1 Transcript in Int. NAB, v. 601, f. 2502 (1). The police did not always find it easy to take this advice, as the 1930 report from the Bache Peninsula Detachment shows:
"During the hunting last fall Cst. Fraser was forever grumbling about the way the natives were hunting, so knowing that this man had no idea of hunting in this country I told him to never mind the natives and pay attention to his own affairs, immediately he invited me to take off my hat and fight and he would show me whether he knew anything or not, but I refrained from this method as long as possible, but in December he carried it into personal affairs and it came to blows." Const. N. McLean's report, Diaries, BP, v. 1.

2 17 October 1922.

3 This involved a different area--the west coast of Ellesmere Island and the Sverdrup Islands.

with the Coppermine region, it was murder which brought the police to Baffin Island. The victim, a trader from Newfoundland named Robert Janes, had set up a post in 1916 on Eclipse Sound, not far from Pond Inlet.[1] He had had little success, and had grown morose. In the spring of 1920 he attempted to return to civilization at Chesterfield Inlet, and while at Cape Crawford was shot by the local Eskimos, apparently because he had frightened them by his attitude. In contrast to the earlier Rouvière-Le Roux case, this affair was fairly easy for the police, for transportation was available. The Hudson's Bay Company planned to open a post at Pond Inlet in the summer of 1921, and readily agreed to take S/Sgt. Joy on the S.S. Baychimo to investigate the Janes case. Joy experienced little difficulty in finding the murderers and bringing them to Pond Inlet; he was thus already on the scene when the police post was set up in 1922. The result of the affair was that on her next trip north, in 1923, the Arctic brought a judicial party to Pond Inlet; one Eskimo was sentenced to ten years in Stony Mountain penitentiary, another was acquitted, and a third was sent for two years to the Pond

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1 P.J. Usher, op. cit., p. 131.

Inlet post.[1]

Following the establishment of Craig Harbour and Pond Inlet in 1922, the police extended their operations over new parts of the eastern Arctic. The C.G.S. Arctic, refitted at a cost of $105,000,[2] landed a detachment at Pangnirtung, Cumberland Gulf, in 1923, and in 1924 another was set up at Dundas Harbour, on the south-east coast of Devon Island.[3] In that latter year the Arctic managed to land supplies at Cape Sabine, at the southern end of Kane Basin, so that the members of the Craig Harbour detachment

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1 Insp. C.E. Wilcox gave a full account of the Janes case in R.C.M.P. Report 1923. Speaking of the sentences, he said they "will have a more beneficial effect than a sentence of death. Noo-kud-lah was led away immediately after sentence was passed, to the ship, through a gazing crowd of his own people . . . hardly possible that a native with the prestige that Noo-kud-lah must have had with the other Eskimo at the time he killed Janes could have been subjected to greater humiliation." Ibid., pp. 33-34. Peter Freuchen, on the other hand, thought the sentence was "utterly fruitless and meaningless." Book of the Eskimos, (Fawcett Crest edition, 1961), p. 137.

2 Canada PC 2473, 15 January 1923.

3 Detachments in the eastern Arctic were established as follows:
1920--Port Burwell
1922--Craig Harbour (closed 1926, reopened 1933)
1922--Pond Inlet
1923--Pangnirtung
1924--Dundas Harbour
1926--Bache Peninsula (closed 1933)
1927--Lake Harbour

could patrol north to where the Thule Eskimos were actually hunting the musk-oxen.

For the government had not forgotten Stefansson's warning that a police post at the extreme southern end of Ellesmere Island could not exercise sovereignty over the whole island, especially because the alleged encroachments were taking place some two hundred miles to the north. Ottawa's concern with the question of sovereignty had not ceased with the establishment of the Craig Harbour post. On April 24th 1925, the first meeting of the "Northern Advisory Board" was held.[1] The board comprised representatives of most government departments which had interests in the Arctic; members included W.W. Cory (chairman) and J.D. Craig from the Department of the Interior, Charles Camsell from the Department of Mines, O.D. Skelton from External Affairs, R.M. Anderson, the naturalist from the Victoria Memorial Museum, Duncan Campbell Scott of Indian Affairs, G.J. Desbarats of the Fisheries Department, and Cortlandt Starnes of the R.C.M.P.[2]

The immediate impetus for the formation of the Northern Advisory Board was the proposed Arctic expedition of the American explorer Donald B. MacMillan.[3] MacMillan, who between 1914 and 1917 had discovered much of Greely Fiord

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1 At first it was called the "Interdepartmental Advisory Committee re Canada's Arctic Islands." Copies of the minutes of its meetings are in the Harkin Papers, v. 2.

2 They were not all present at each meeting. The board met intermittently for about two years.

3 See D.H. Dinwoodie, "Arctic Controversy," Canadian Historical Review, v. LIII, no. 1, March 1972.

and had proven that "Crocker Land" was a chimera,[1] was preparing an expedition for 1925 which would be based at Etah, with stations on Ellesmere and Axel Heiberg Islands. Its chief purpose was to carry out aerial exploration of the Polar region, under the leadership of Commander Richard Byrd. When the Canadian government heard of this expedition, it informed MacMillan through the British ambassador in Washington that Canadian licences were required if he wished to secure specimens of Arctic fauna, but letters to that effect had been ignored.[2] The Northern Advisory Board met this situation by adopting a triple course of action--gentle suggestions to the Americans, surveillance of MacMillan and Byrd's activities in the Arctic, and a widening of police activities to forestall any possible difficulties. In May 1925 W.W. Cory went to Washington to tell the Secretary of the Navy, Curtis Wilbur, and the Naval Bureau of Aeronautics that Canada's permission should be obtained before MacMillan landed on Canadian soil.[3] In the same month the Americans were told that the R.C.M.P. and the

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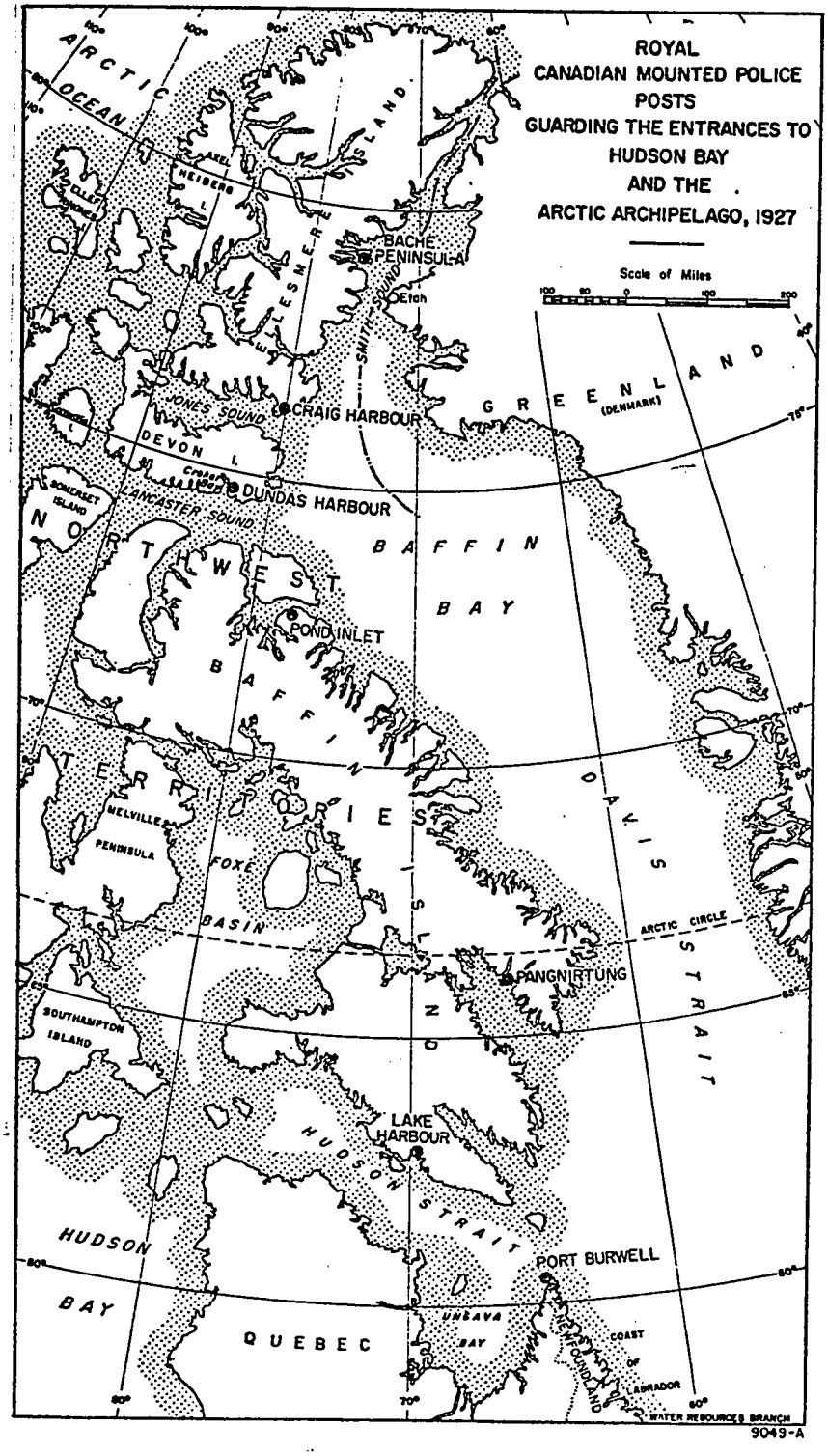
1 Canadian Hydrographic Service, Pilot of Arctic Canada, I, (Ottawa, 1970), p. 76. Possibly it was an ice-island.

2 The most important documents are printed in Lovell C. Clark, ed., Documents on Canadian External Relations, III, pp. 575-580.

3 Dinwoodie, op. cit., p. 56. In subsequent expeditions, carried out in 1926, 1927, and 1928, MacMillan sought and obtained the requisite permission from the Canadian authorities. G.W. Smith, op. cit. p. 210. See also A.E. Millward, Southern Baffin Island, (Ottawa, 1930), pp. 100-101.

Map V.



From Diamond Jenness, Eskimo Administration: II. Canada, (Montreal, 1964), p. 31.

Hudson's Bay Company were more than willing to assist MacMillan's expedition, and would be happy to "furnish the necessary permits" for exploration in Canadian territory.[1] An officer of the R.C.M.P. was sent with the Arctic in 1925 to call on MacMillan and see what he was up to. Finally, it was decided to try and establish a permanent detachment at Bache Peninsula, near Cape Sabine, to emphasize Canada's ownership of that sensitive area.[2]

The government's awareness of every nuance of the sovereignty issue is shown by a minor incident involving the MacMillan expedition. In August 1925, following the recommendations mentioned above, the Arctic, with Insp. Wilcox on board, visited MacMillan at Etah, on the north-west coast of Greenland. G.P. Mackenzie, in command of the Canadian party, had a conversation with Commander Byrd, in which Byrd asked whether any Canadian had ever been to Axel Heiberg Island. Mackenzie replied in the negative, but the implications of the question worried him. In consultation with Insp. Wilcox and S/Sgt. Joy, who was then in charge of the Craig Harbour detachment, it was decided to send a patrol from that post to Axel Heiberg Island the next winter to rectify the omission.[3] The question of the new detachment

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1 Copy of a telegram from the Governor-General to the Canadian Chargé d'Affaires in Washington, 26 May 1925, Harkin Papers, v. 2.
2 Meeting of the Northern Advisory Board, 11 June 1925, ibid.
3 G.P. Mackenzie's report to the Northern Advisory Board, 19 October 1925, ibid.

was resolved in 1926 when the Craig Harbour detachment was closed, its buildings abandoned, and a new one opened at Bache Peninsula.[1] Its latitude, just over 79° N., made it the most northerly detachment in the history of the force,[2] and probably the most northerly post office in the world at that time.

The MacMillan-Byrd expedition was only partly successful. The base at Etah was established, but Byrd was not able to set up camps on Ellesmere or Axel Heiberg Islands, owing to difficulties with his aircraft and bad flying conditions. The expedition remained at Etah for only three weeks, and then returned to the United States.[3] In retrospect, the attitude of the Canadian government representatives may have seemed extreme; the United States government had never moved to consolidate any claims it might have had to Canadian territory by virtue of the explorations of its nationals. Canadian nervousness may best be seen as an over-reaction after several decades of inaction.

This official apprehensiveness, however, led to a series of remarkable police patrols in the mid and late

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1 The detachment, opened on August 6th 1926, was on the north side of Flagler Fiord. Wilcox called it "by far the most pleasant and attractive place in the eastern Arctic." R.C.M.P. Report 1926, p. 43.

2 The modern detachment is at Alexandria Fiord, a bit to the south.

3 Dinwoodie, op. cit., passim.

1920's; these covered most of the remaining parts of the Arctic archipelago which had not previously been visited by a Canadian. Two of these patrols deserve mention in this context, for they were entirely for the purpose of sovereignty and exploration, going through territory which was completely uninhabited. The first was the result of Commander Byrd's reported question. On March 26th 1927, S/Sgt. Joy, with one constable, three Eskimos and four dog teams left Bache Peninsula, crossed Ellesmere Island, and visited Axel Heiberg, Amund Ringnes, King Christian, Cornwall, and Graham Islands, returning to their post on May 18th; the distance covered was 1,300 miles.[1] Two years later, Joy, now an Inspector, made an even longer patrol from Dundas Harbour to Bache Peninsula via Melville Island (Winter Harbour), Hecla and Griper Bay, and Lougheed, Ellef Ringnes, Cornwall, Axel Heiberg, and Ellesmere Islands. The patrol lasted from March 12th to May 31st 1929, covered 1,700 miles, and was rightly hailed by Commissioner Starnes as "the most noteworthy event of the year in the north."[2] Although none of the land traversed by Joy could be classed as terra incognita, the patrols were remarkable for their length and their speed--even Stefansson, one suspects, could

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1 The patrol is described in R.C.M.P. Report 1927, pp. 55-60.
2 The patrol is described in R.C.M.P. Report 1929, pp. 62-71.

not have done better.

These were the two longest patrols, but there were several others which were scarcely less important. The police at the Bache Peninsula[1] and Dundas Harbour detachments, since there were no indigenous inhabitants near them,[2] spent most of their time on patrol, and thus a great deal of territory was covered. In one instance new land was discovered, when in 1928 Const. T.C. Makinson of the Bache Peninsula detachment discovered the previously unknown large inlet off Smith Sound which now bears his name.[3] In 1929 Cpl. E. Anstead of the same detachment patrolled nearly eleven hundred miles along the west coast of Ellesmere Island as far north as the Bjorne peninsula. In 1932 Cpl. H.W. Stallworthy, with Joy the most successful of the police in carrying out these long patrols, made a journey completely around Axel Heiberg Island in search of Dr. H.E.K. Krueger, the German explorer; the distance covered was fourteen hundred miles.[4] These patrols, which took

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1 The Bache Peninsula detachment was very hard to supply. In 1928, 1929, and 1939 the supply ship had to discharge cargo for the post some distance away on the ice. In 1932 the ship could not get near enough even for this expedient, and the cargo was put off at Craig Harbour. In 1933 Bache Peninsula was closed.

2 Except for the Eskimo families hired at Etah to work at the detachments.

3 Pilot of Arctic Canada, I, p. 77.

4 R.C.M.P. Report 1932 and 1934. Dr. Krueger and his party, including A.R.Bjare, a Dane, arrived at Bache Peninsula in March 1930 with government permits to explore in the area of Axel Heiberg Island. Stallworthy found records in 1932 indicating that the Krueger party had perished near Meighen Island in the winter of 1930-31.

the police to almost all the islands of the Arctic archipelago,[1] fulfilled one of the main requirements of sovereignty--that of exercising control, insofar as control could be exercised over uninhabited territory. Between 1922 and 1932, therefore, Canada had

> exercised jurisdiction in and over the Arctic islands by establishing police, customs, and post offices at strategic and necessary points and by conducting patrols over the surrounding territory . . . The title of Canada to the Arctic islands was recognized by Norway in 1930; and the claims of Denmark and the United States have been nullified by Canadian occupation of the territory.[2]

In the more southerly parts of the eastern Arctic, where there were trading posts and Eskimos, the police on patrol had more functions to perform than their fellows in the far north. Patrols were regularly sent out from Port Burwell, Pangnirtung, Pond Inlet and Lake Harbour to take the census, report on native health, advertise the presence of the police, and do a little exploring. In 1924 the police patrols to the Eskimo camps took on a greater importance when the government at Ottawa at last decided to assume a formal responsibility for the natives of the Arctic. By a revision of the Indian Act which came into effect on July 19th 1924, the Superintendent of Indian Affairs took

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1 In 1934 and 1935, Stallworthy, on loan to the Oxford University Ellesmere Island Expedition, reached the site of Fort Conger and Hazen Lake. He got as far as 82°25' N., a record for the police at that time. In October 1935 he was made a fellow of the Royal Geographical Society.

2 V.K. Johnston, op. cit., p. 40. The customs and post offices referred to were of course police operations, since the police were the sole government presence in the area.

charge of Eskimo affairs as well.[1] While this change was of no immediate benefit to the Eskimos, it did mean that the government had taken official notice of them, and would perhaps eventually do something for them. In the meantime they were visited by the police and ministered to in a rough and ready fashion. The R.C.M.P. patrols (and the travels of explorers)[2] were cited by the Department of Indian Affairs as the chief sources of information on the Eskimos. Reading the reports of the R.C.M.P. from the eastern Arctic compared with the government's reports on Eskimo welfare, one wonders whether the police were listened to at all. Hardly a report from Baffin Island in the 1920's was without reference to "lung trouble," "tuberculosis," "pneumonia" among the Eskimos. In 1925 the Department of Indian Affairs reported that it had "not undertaken any large outlay in regard to medical attention, as we are informed there is surprisingly little sickness throughout the north."[3] In

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1 Canada, Statutes, 14-15 Geo. V, c. 47. In 1928 responsibility for the Eskimos was transferred to the Commissioner of the Northwest Territories. In 1936 it was transferred again, this time to the Department of Mines and Resources. Jenness, op. cit., p. 33.

2 Report of the Superintendent General of Indian Affairs for 1925, pp. 10-12. Knud Rasmussen, a member of the Fifth Thule Expedition (which operated under government authorization), was profusely thanked for his "highly valuable information" on the Eskimos, which had given the government "a more complete and detailed census of the Eskimos than has previously been available."

3 Ibid., p. 10.

the R.C.M.P. report for 1926 Insp. Wilcox at Pond Inlet warned that "unless medical assistance is given these people at once, inside ten years the native population of North Baffin Island will be wiped out."[1] The government spoke glowingly of the services performed by the doctor on the yearly visit of the Arctic; the actual care provided (by the police) was more rudimentary:

> . . . a young married woman . . . temperature was around 106, and the natives all told me it was no use doing anything for her . . . I treated her as I did the others [several were ill] . . . hot tea . . . a ration of tea and biscuit . . . Dover powders, poulticed their chests and gave them a laxative . . . in a few days she was well and around again . . . illuminating what effect a cup of tea, a little laxative, coupled with a lot of faith, would have on the natives.[2]

Faith or not, it was a fact that in 1925-26, out of three hundred Eskimos around Pond Inlet, there were twelve deaths, eight due to an "unidentified disease," while only three children were born, all of whom also died.[3] At Wakeham Bay in 1927-28 there were eight births and thirty-two deaths in a population of two hundred and eight.[4]

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1 R.C.M.P. Report 1926, p. 46.

2 Ibid. The incident took place at Milne Inlet. The N.C.O. in charge of the Pangnirtung detachment in 1927 observed that "undoubtedly we often cure, or at least relieve, due . . . more to 'faith' on the part of the patient, than to the very simple drugs to which the average policeman confines himself." R.C.M.P. Report 1928, p. 80.

3 R.C.M.P. Report 1926, p. 46.

4 R.C.M.P. Report 1928, p. 84. A constable was stationed at the Department of Marine and Fisheries base at Wakeham Bay and another at the base on Nottingham Island. Both were on loan from the Lake Harbour detachment.

The contrast between the plight of the Eskimos of the eastern Arctic, as reported by the police and traders, and the "cloak of deceptive or pious phrases"[1] which the government published annually is striking. It shows that the government's almost only concern with the region was the establishment of sovereignty. Once this had been done, the only remaining interest was in rigid economies of expenditure,[2] especially during the great depression of the 1930's.

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1 Jenness, op. cit., p. 46, quotes cheerful reassurances from several years. The Eskimo population at Coppermine was reported in 1931 to be free of contagious disease at a time when a doctor engaged by the government had discovered that one in five of the local natives was tubercular. The government did open a medical post at Pangnirtung in 1924, and the resident doctor accompanied the police there on patrol. The Anglican hospital at Chesterfield (1929) received government support. Aklavik had two hospitals by 1927, one Anglican and one Roman Catholic. Ibid., pp. 44-45.

2 Jenness, op. cit., p. 71, has calculated the amount spent on Eskimos by the governments of the United States, Canada, and Denmark during 1939:

	Alaska (pop. 19,000)	Canada (pop. 7,000)	Greenland (pop. 18,000)
Education, Health and Welfare	$844,000	$88,000	$338,000
Police	8,000	119,000	nil

"What should we deduce from this table?" he asks. "Did the political philosophies of Denmark and the United States differ so greatly from Canada's philosophy that the first two countries could select doctors and schoolteachers to be the apostles of western civilization, whereas Canada had to assign that role to the police? Or was Canada, as I believe, negligent?"

The role played by the police in the eastern Arctic did not change in essentials between 1922 and 1940, the final year covered by this study. Beyond a certain reshuffling of detachments, the routine of the police did not vary much; survival occupied much of their time, and patrolling took up the rest. Most of these patrols eventually became "routine"--that is, regularly scheduled; by 1928 the patrol from Pangnirtung to Home Bay and return, a distance of 537 miles, was so commonplace that details of it were no longer considered of interest to the public.[1] Besides the medical benefits the Eskimos derived from these visits, the police believed that they prevented outbreaks of violence, such as the Home Bay murders of 1923, which were caused by a form of (Christian) religious mania.[2] The yearly patrol, it was believed, "breaks the current of these unhealthy thoughts" by giving the Eskimos something new to occupy their minds; it also instilled "some real respect for the big white man outside whose servants the police are."[3] But given the policy of the government--to spend only what the bare essentials of sovereignty demanded--

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1 R.C.M.P. Report 1928, p. 80.

2 R.C.M.P. Report 1923, pp. 36-37. Missionaries had visited the Eskimo settlement at Kivitoo, Home Bay, and had left behind an enthusiasm for, but an imperfect understanding of, Christian principles. A self-styled messiah caused the death of two men and was himself murdered. The police patrolled from Pangnirtung in 1924 but took no action other than to explain the Eskimos' error to them.

3 R.C.M.P. Report 1928, p. 77.

the police could do no more than dispense a few relief supplies, try a little amateur medical treatment, and preach the secular gospel of "a wise, unselfish, but very powerful directing authority outside."[1] This was the pattern of the 1920's and the 1930's in the eastern Arctic.

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1 Ibid.

CHAPTER XIII

THE END OF THE FRONTIER

Between 1920 and 1940 the Canadian Arctic ceased to be a frontier as it underwent rapid change, both social and technological. Technological change manifested itself in the arrival in the north of the aeroplane and the radio, two innovations which did much to alter the pattern of police response to the challenges of the frontier. In 1921 Commissioner Perry, in his last report before retirement, noted the first aeroplane journey by a member of the R.C.M.P. on duty. Surprisingly, perhaps, this did not occur in southern Canada, but between Fort Simpson and Edmonton, when a police sergeant investigating a murder case travelled in a plane belonging to the Imperial Oil Company.[1] In July 1929 Aklavik saw its first plane, flown by "Punch" Dickens, who took the Eskimos for rides at ten dollars a head, and by the end of that year plans were made to carry mail by plane from Fort Resolution to Aklavik.[2] On Dominion Day 1930 the first commercial plane landed at Herschel Island with a load of sight-seers. Technology had

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1 R.C.M.P. Report 1921, p. 46. The plane was in the north in connection with the intense but short-lived boom which occurred when that company struck oil at Norman Wells in the summer of 1920.

2 R.C.M.P. Report 1929, p. 39.

given the western Arctic a new link with the rest of Canada.

Another link was provided by radio, which spread all over the Arctic in the 1920's. Wireless stations were built at Aklavik (1924), at Port Burwell, and at more southerly places, manned by the Canadian Corps of Signals.[1] By 1928 every police detachment had a receiving set (though not a transmitter; these were too expensive), so that messages could be sent over the ordinary broadcast band as far north as Bache Peninsula. The R.C.M.P. had an arrangement with station KDKA in Pittsburgh to send messages to the Arctic detachments on a regular schedule.[2] The radios must have been a godsend to the men at the isolated posts; for several years in the late 1920's most reports from the Arctic dwell at length on the domestic and foreign stations received, with comments on the quality of the music and the humour.

A good example of the way in which technology affected the operations of the police on the frontier is the case of

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1 In 1928 there were transmitting stations at Port Burwell, Cape Hope's Advance, and Nottingham Island (Department of Marine and Fisheries); Fort Smith, Fort Simpson, Aklavik, Herschel Island, and Fort Resolution (Canadian Corps of Signals--the last two summer only); Hudson's Bay Company ships Baymaud and Fort James; R.C.M.P. schooner St. Roch; Port Nelson and Churchill (Department of Railways and Canals); Rankin Inlet (Dominion Explorers Ltd.); Baker Lake (Northern Aerial Mining Exploration Co.). R.C.M.P. Report 1928, p. 61.

2 Ibid.

the notorious Albert Johnson, the so-called "mad trapper of Rat River," which took place during the winter of 1931-1932.[1] Radio was extensively used in the case; when it was thought that Johnson might try to flee from the Fort McPherson area to northern Yukon, radio messages were relayed through Dawson, Anchorage, and Fort Yukon to the R.C.M.P. detachment at Old Crow, ordering the police there to block his route. Significantly, it was found that the old method of sending out a patrol by dog-team did not work well in this case. The contrast with the Bathurst Inlet patrol of the first World War is striking. In the earlier instance, the police had set out into the virtual unknown, had met a reasonably friendly reception, and had eventually accomplished their mission. This had always been the pattern; Eskimos and whites on the northern frontier had never offered the police serious resistance.[2] When in the Johnson case the police encountered a man who fired at them without warning, and accurately too, they found that the old methods had to be supplemented by modern ones. Four major patrols were sent out; one policeman was killed, another policeman and a member of the Signal Corps were

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1 The affair received very wide publicity; it is summarized in Harwood Steele, Policing the North, chapter XXXVIII, and in R.C.M.P. Report 1932, pp. 106-110. See also Dick North, The Mad Trapper of Rat River, (Toronto, 1972).

2 The case of Cpl. Doak (see chapter XI) is a partial exception.

badly wounded, but the episode ended only when a plane, piloted by the experienced bush pilot "Wop" May, was chartered for search and supply purposes, and the final patrol was provided with a low-powered radio transmitter-receiver. But for these expedients, the affair might have been indefinitely protracted, for Johnson was as resourceful as the police and far more ruthless.

Another application of new methods began in 1928 when the police finally acquired a ship capable of navigating the waters of the Arctic archipelago and wintering in the north. This was the motor schooner St. Roch, built in Vancouver and sent north in the summer of 1928.[1] The St. Roch, which patrolled the northern coast of Canada from 1928 to 1948, performed several useful functions for the police. It freed them from their old dependence on others for supplying posts such as Herschel Island, Coppermine, Tree River and Cambridge Bay. It also removed them from the anomalous position of having to depend on traders for transportation to check on their activities at remote spots. It permitted the police to bring accused criminals from remote areas in the western Arctic to trial at Herschel Island or Aklavik, and the sick to hospital. It was a demonstration of sovereignty; fixed during the winter and mobile during the short navigation season, it was the answer

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1 Henry Larsen, The Big Ship, (Toronto, 1967), is a good account of the work performed by the St. Roch.

to the problem posed as early as 1900 by Comptroller Frederick White--how to make the police on the Arctic coast more mobile and thus more effective. Sgt. Fitzgerald had recognized the problem at Herschel Island in 1903 when he was compelled to ask traders to give him a list of their goods and to ignore those who bypassed him altogether. Now after twenty-five years the R.C.M.P. could make effective summer patrols in the western and central Arctic without the assistance of anyone.

By 1928 the pre-war pattern of Canada's northern frontier was set. Despite the new technology, however, it was in some ways similar to the old one. The government still did as little as possible, leaving, as before, the souls of the natives to the missionaries, their trade to the Hudson's Bay Company, and their welfare and control to the police. They, as in previous decades, performed a variety of services for the government, not the least of which was to enable Ottawa to tell itself that everything necessary was being done for the Eskimos. The exterior forces at work on the far north did not change in essentials between 1910 and 1940; it was not until the second World War and especially the ensuing Cold War that the Arctic frontier began to take on the importance to Canada that it now holds.

An essential fact about the northern frontier during the years 1895 to 1940 is that it was always moving. If the frontier is thought of as the limit of penetration of

government control, it lay in 1885 at the level of the Saskatchewan River, and in 1900 at Herschel Island and Churchill. By 1920 it was at Coronation Gulf, north Baffin Island, and Ellesmere Island. By 1940 there was no longer a northern frontier in the sense that the government, through the police, had spread its influence over the whole of the inhabited Arctic and some of the uninhabited parts as well. Thus in any given year there was a wide variation in the level of "civilization" in the Northwest Territories, generally depending on the length of time the white man had been at a particular locality. In 1925, for instance, the Mackenzie Delta was becoming almost cosmopolitan, with two missions, two hospitals under construction, the police, Hudson's Bay Company, and several private traders in the area. Some of the natives were even becoming wealthy, for the 1920's marked the high point of the white fox trade, and by 1929 a good skin bought fifty dollars at Fort McPherson. Some Indians and Eskimos made enough money to be called "plutocrats,"[1] for they owned their own schooners, and in some cases were rumoured to have earned $10,000 in a year from trapping. At the same time, the police were encountering Eskimos around King William Island who had hardly seen a white man and were still virtually in the stone age.

Because of the diversity of conditions in the north

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1 By Jenness, op. cit., p. 50.

and the changing nature of the frontier between 1920 and 1940, the challenges facing the police varied widely according to their location. There were posts in the inhabited Arctic where these challenges were of the traditional kind. At the Tree River detachment in 1925, for example, the main work carried out by the police was to make two long patrols by dog sled--one east to investigate a murder at Perry River, and one even farther east to investigate another murder on Adelaide Peninsula.[1] The four detachments which made up the "Arctic Sub-district"[2] --Aklavik (headquarters), Herschel Island, Baillie Island (moved to Cambridge Bay in 1926), and Tree River--had responsibility for a stretch of Arctic coast which lay between the 95th and 141st degrees of west longitude, about twelve hundred miles in a straight line. They also spanned the gap between the most sophisticated and most primitive Eskimos of the Arctic.[3]

In the parts of the Yukon and Northwest Territories where the police and whites generally had been established

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1 R.C.M.P. Report 1925, p. 47. The first patrol covered 850 miles, the second 1,350. Tree River is at 111°51' W., Perry River is at 102°33' W., and Adelaide Peninsula is at 97°30' W.

2 The Arctic Sub-district was a part of "G" Division, which then included detachments in northern Alberta and all those in the Northwest Territories mainland west of the Barren Lands. Later it was enlarged to comprise all "northern" detachments, including those in Hudson Bay, and was directed from Ottawa.

3 Unless those in the Padlei region of the Barren Lands are considered to be more primitive.

longer, administrative duties loomed larger. As had been the case during the Yukon gold rush, the police filled a large number of civil posts, and these duties sometimes took up much of their time and energy. At Herschel Island, the police collected $14,588 in income tax during July and August 1925; Supt. G. Ritchie, commanding "G" Division, commented, "Our men had to prepare the intricate forms, the persons concerned not having the faintest idea thereof. This in itself takes up time, valuable at that particular season."[1] It is possible to arrive at a fairly accurate picture of the balance between the civil and criminal work carried out by the police in the Northwest Territories for a particular year, bearing in mind that the balance reflects the Territories as a whole, not any one detachment.[2]

I. Classified Summary of Cases Entered and Convictions made under the Criminal Code from October 1 1924, to September 30 1925.

Northwest Terr.	Cases Invest.	Convic- tions	Dismissed Withdrawn	To Dept Conc'd	Still Invest.	No Pros.
Murder	5	--	--	--	4	1
Common Assault	3	2	--	--	--	1
Drunk & Disorderly	6	6	--	--	--	--
False Pretences	1	1	--	--	--	--
Mischief	2	2	--	--	--	--
Rape	1	--	--	--	--	1
Theft	6	2	--	1	--	3
Vagrancy	4	3	1	--	--	--
Common Nuisance	1	1	--	--	--	--
Total	29	17	1	1	4	6

1 R.C.M.P. Report 1925, p. 27.
2 Ibid., pp. 78-79.

II. Classified Summary of Investigations and Convictions made under Federal Statutes from October 1 1924, to September 30 1925, (Northwest Territories).

Offences Against	Cases Invest.	Convic- tions	Dismissed Withdrawn	Still Invest.	No Pros.
Indian Act	10	9	--	--	1
Insanity Ordinance	1	1	--	--	--
Northwest Game Act	27	17	2	4	4
Northwest Terr. Act	9	4	1	--	4
Prairie Fire Ordinance	1	1	--	--	--
Total	48	32	3	4	9

(Note: Although the R.C.M.P. report for 1925 says these statistics are for the Northwest Territories, they likely included those detachments in Northern Alberta which were then part of "G" Division. This seems the best explanation for the inclusion of "Prairie Fire Ordinance in this table, and "Assistance to the Province of Alberta" in table III.)

III. Classified Summary of Investigations made at the Request of other Departments, other than Breaches of the Federal Statutes, from October 1 1924, to September 30 1925, (Northwest Territories).

Department of Indian Affairs	29
" of the Interior	712
" of Marine and Fisheries	7
" of Mines	6
Post Office Department	1
Department of the Secretary of State, Naturalization Branch	21
Miscellaneous--	
Inquiries for Missing Persons	10
Deceased Persons' Estates	3
Accidental Deaths	7
Assistance to Province of Alberta	107
Suicides	2
Inquiries not classified	10
Total	915

It can be seen that civil cases greatly outnumbered criminal ones. Offences against the Criminal Code in the Northwest Territories were few in the 1920's--only twenty-nine in 1925--and increased only when the white population of the

Territories began to grow. By 1947 the number of criminal offences had increased nearly seventeen times, to 489; the Commissioner attributed this rise mostly to the increase in the population of the town of Yellowknife.[1] Although crimes were few between 1920 and 1940, they did receive most of the public attention directed towards the police on the northern frontier; the case of the "mad trapper" received all the sensational publicity at which the newspapers of the 1920's were so skilled. But it was also the solid acts of administration which established the police on the frontier--the settling of the estates of deceased persons (which required a good deal of work), the numerous services performed for the Department of the Interior (for which specifics are unfortunately not given), and the rest of the investigations carried out.

In 1949, Commissioner S.T. Wood[2] commented on the passing of the northern frontier:

> . . . the time has now passed (in fact it passed several years ago) when a large part of the Territories can no longer be looked upon as really isolated, and in that part of the Territories some of the detachments situated therein are just as busy and have as much real police work to do as the average detachment in the provinces and in addition have the Government Administrative work to do.[3]

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1 R.C.M.P. Report 1947, p. 53. Some of this increase was due to the population increase attendant on defence projects. The number of civil cases increased also, but not to the same extent. In 1945, for instance, Criminal Code cases for the Yukon and Northwest Territories numbered 559, and cases concerning federal statutes, 530--and increase over 1925 of sixteen times in the first instance and eleven times in the second. R.C.M.P. Report 1945, p. 27.

2 Son of the Z.T. Wood who had served in the Yukon.

3 R.C.M.P. Report 1949, p. 65.

It is striking how the distinction between civil duties and "real" police work persisted in the R.C.M.P, for S.T. Wood's words are almost an exact echo of those used by his father in the Yukon fifty years earlier.[1] He was probably thinking of the old age pension and the new family allowance, which the police began to distribute in remote areas at the end of the war, involving them in much extra paperwork. The old police prejudice against this sort of work survived the passing of the old frontier. The fact that the Territories were no longer isolated by the 1940's did not mean that the old techniques of policing had disappeared altogether, but the new ones which had been introduced in the 1920's were becoming increasingly more important. The report for 1950 included a table of patrols carried out by "G" Division[2] which shows the old and the new way of doing things:

Patrols	N.W.T.	Yukon	Quebec	Hudson Bay	Total
Dogs	34,507 miles	3,333	1,330	7,690	46,860
Boats	29,390	12,008	1,291	8,211	50,900
Plane					
(public)	92,085	42,771	10,375	3,096	148,327
(police)	31,256	--	--	--	31,256
Auto	60,170	173,796	--	252	234,218
Rail	7,504	7,500	750	2,842	18,596
Foot	2,088	6,351	364	371	9,174
Totals	257,000	245,759	14,110	22,462	539,331

[3]

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1 See chapter V.

2 Then including all detachments in the Yukon and Northwest Territories, Hudson Bay, and northern Quebec. In 1949 it had forty-one detachments.

3 R.C.M.P. Report 1950, p. 57. All but one of these patrols were listed as "routine." The total for the Yukon reflects the work done patrolling the Alaska highway by automobile.

1940 (or more generally, the second World War) is an appropriate closing date for this dissertation because it marked the end of a period of police service on the northern frontier. To that time the police acted as substitutes for virtually the entire apparatus of the federal government, but after the war Ottawa at last began to take positive action in the more remote parts of the Arctic, especially in regard to native education and general welfare. Diamond Jenness refers to the 1945-1950 period as one of "laying the new foundations,"[1] in which government schools were built, medical care was provided, and some serious thought was given to the problem of the native economy. The new Department of Resources and Development, which took over the management of Eskimo affairs in 1950 as successor to the Department of Mines and Resources, sent increasing numbers of civil servants north to deal with northern problems. The federal government slowly assumed real responsibility for the government and administration of the north, moving from its traditional passive role to a more active one.[2] This did not happen overnight or everywhere at once--the police continued to take the census and distribute welfare in remote places--but gradually the police were divested of many of their civil duties and began to concen-

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1 Jenness, op. cit., p. 78.
2 Ibid., chapters 9 and 10.

trate on what they considered to be "real" police work--the prevention and detection of crime--duties which increased in proportion to the population and modernization of the north.

CHAPTER XIV

CONCLUSION

It is not really difficult to summarize this dissertation, for despite its considerable temporal and geographical scope, it has been based on an essentially simple point. The present writer has not undertaken a detailed history of the Mounted Police, for a dozen doctoral dissertations would not suffice for such a task. Nor, for the same reason, has a complete history of the police in the Canadian north been attempted. The point of this dissertation has been to examine the initial stages of the service of the Mounted Police in the north--that period in which the north could properly be termed a "frontier," in the sense that it was still free of the civil and military controls of the central government. The central theme has been to examine the role of the Mounted Police in the transformation of the north from this state to one of relative "civilization."

The role of the police should be familiar to the student of the British colonial system. The Mounted Police were, in a sense, the Canadian equivalent of those forces of imperialism--the British Army, the Royal Irish Constabulary, or the various colonial police forces--which brought British law and civil administration to the wild corners of the Empire. The difference in the Canadian case was that the colonial power was in Ottawa rather than in London. The

police, as agents of this central authority, imposed on the Canadian north a system largely alien to it, a system which originated elsewhere, in a different culture, and was designed not to express the aspirations of the north, but to regulate and control it.

Like the Royal Irish Constabulary, that other colonial force to which the Mounted Police are so often compared, the Canadian force was primarily an agent of external control rather than a domestic "police force" in the ordinary sense. What the Canadian government wanted of the northern frontier was that it become and remain "Canadian," in the sense that Ottawa's absolute sovereignty over the area would hereafter be unquestioned. It was obvious in some instances that the federal government had little idea what to do with the north, or what it might be good for; but the government was determined that, useful or not, the north should belong to no one else. The police were agents of control, demonstrated by the exercise of police powers--the administration of law, and so forth--but this function was subordinate to the exercise of sovereignty. To put it another way--the Canadian government sent the police to bring law to the Eskimos not basically out of concern for their welfare and the regularization of their society; what the government essentially desired was to demonstrate that these people and their land belonged to Canada and to no one else. The political nature of the force was thus of the highest importance.

Very little attempt has been made in this dissertation to analyze the human aspect of the Mounted Police insofar as individuals are concerned, except where a generalization can be made about an attitude common to the police as a whole. The approach taken by the police to the problems of the Indians and Eskimos on the northern frontier seems, for instance, to have been governed by a discernible police zeitgeist, and was sufficiently uniform to permit valid comment to be made on it. The Mounted Police opinion of Americans, though this did not have the opportunity to manifest itself everywhere in the north, was similarly quite uniform.

Does this mean that the police can be characterised as a homogeneous body of men, with similar social and political attitudes? The answer is both yes and no. On some questions, such as the two just mentioned, there was considerable unanimity of opinion, especially among the officers of the force, who inevitably contributed the most to the written record. These men mostly belonged to the Anglo-Saxon elite of eastern Canada, and thus had many attitudes in common. Men educated at the Royal Military College in Kingston, or who had served in the militia and in one or both of the Riel rebellions--as so many of the officers did--were bound to have similar attitudes towards many things. Knowing the views of the Canadian late Victorian and Edwardian upper middle classes on American frontier demo-

cracy, one can predict, for instance, almost exactly what the officers of the N.W.M.P. would think of Skagway and the American population of Dawson--a prediction which is borne out by the police reports. One could equally well predict the reaction of the same officers to the presence of the French tricolour at the Mackenzie River missions.

But generalizations are more dangerous when one turns from the practical to the purely philosophical, especially when considering the non-commissioned ranks. R.C. MacLeod has drawn up a table indicating the former occupations of recruits taken into the force between the years 1873 and 1902. The four largest groups were: skilled workers 29%, farmers 27%, clerks 15.6%, police or military 10%.[1] From these figures MacLeod makes a deduction about the character of the force:

> . . . most recruits came from occupations that were rising in the scale of social and economic importance in late Victorian times. If the nineteenth century was the great age of the middle class, the twentieth was to be the age of the lower middle class. In the period under consideration the lower middle class was expanding to include the two groups from which a majority of the police were drawn. These were clerks and skilled workers . . . The growing social and economic importance of these groups and the increased self-confidence that accompanied this growth were reflected in such developments as the extension of the franchise and the rise of the trade union movement. Much of the success of the Mounted Police and their reputation for energetic and impartial law enforcement stemmed from the awareness, subconscious perhaps, that they represented the direction in which society was moving.[2]

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1 Op. cit., p. 159. On the average about 90% of these were born either in Britain or in Canada.

2 Op. cit., pp. 158-161.

This seems highly speculative, even if one ignores the statement that a majority of police recruits had been clerks or skilled workers (the proportion is 44.6%), or accepts the questionable proposition that the twentieth century was or is the age of the lower middle class. Certainly it is true that the police thought of themselves as an elite--their clashes with minor civil servants in the Yukon showed their distaste for menial or subordinate tasks. But to deduce that the police were subconsciously aware (whatever that means) that they represented the direction in which society was moving is a flight of fancy which the author cannot support with documentation. More prosaic conclusions are reached in the present work.

One such conclusion is that the Mounted Police were by far the most important agency in bringing the northern frontier and its inhabitants within the sphere of federal government control. They were the political, para-military arm of the government, extending its authority over an area ranging from the Yukon to Ellesmere Island, as they had earlier done in the prairies and woodlands of western Canada. The police in some ways shaped the north, chiefly in directions prescribed by Ottawa. They were, for instance, the medium through which the central government--first by neglect, and then by design--changed the history of the Canadian Eskimo. The police, in turn, were shaped by the northern frontier, adapting their methods and institutions

to northern circumstances--the career of the St. Roch is a case in point. The police did not "develop" the northern frontier; this was done largely by missionaries, miners, and traders, who preceded the police, or were their contemporaries in the region. The police were essentially overseers of much of this development.

It might be asked why Ottawa felt it was necessary to send the police, rather than civil servants, to the Arctic, since apart from the Yukon, there was never much actual police work to be done. The answer is partly that the police had proven their worth on the prairies, where a semi-military force had certainly been necessary. In the north, a similar military presence was largely superfluous; but the police were sent there because of their past service, and for want of an equally efficient alternative.

The presence of the police in the north was also the result of the paternalistic attitude displayed by Ottawa towards the frontier. The evidence shows that one must look to the theory of metropolitanism to explain this presence. In their northern service, the police were agents of metropolitanism par excellence, but this did not mean that they were automatons. They did carry out government policy, but since Ottawa had only a vague idea of what do to with the north (outside the Yukon), the police felt free to suggest what policy towards natives, traders, wildlife, and other matters should be. Police reports regularly urged the federal government to take action of one sort or

another on these matters, and sometimes the advice was adopted. In their early concern for the preservation of the musk-ox, for example, the police helped to initiate government policy, and in this sense may be said to have shaped the history of the north.

In their relations with the native peoples of the north, the police displayed an attitude of Social Darwinism typical of their class and era. They respected the Eskimos because, for natives, they were "successful" and self-reliant, and they denigrated the Indians because they were not. Few Canadians at that time, or for many years thereafter, would have granted the native peoples equality, either in theory or in fact; so the police should not be faulted for holding what was no more than the current public and official view.

Nor, in general, can the means and methods used by the police to accomplish their objectives be faulted. Sometimes their work was brilliant, as in the Yukon, and sometimes it was plodding, as in the Baker Lake expedition of the first World War. Notwithstanding Vilhjalmur Stefansson's criticisms, the techniques employed by the police were generally well suited to the problems at hand. Only in very rare and fortunately isolated instances--the Fitzgerald patrol is the best example--did they come to grief as a result of their own shortcomings.

Because circumstances in different countries vary so widely, it is difficult to make a valid comparison of the

work of the Mounted Police with that of other similar forces. The Royal Irish Constabulary, for example, operated in a country where much of the population was intensely hostile to it and to the government it represented. This was not true of the Mounted Police. Even in the Yukon, with its high proportion of Americans, the difference between the governors and the governed was one of attitude and tradition rather than of enmity between conqueror and conquered--a far milder situation than the bitter hatreds of Ireland. The South African Constabulary (which S.B. Steele for a time commanded), and the other African and Asian colonial police forces, were designed to keep order among native populations which vastly outnumbered the rulers. The indigenous population of the Canadian north was small and disorganized, and thus never had the potential for successful rebellion possessed by the subject peoples of India or Africa. A much different force was thus required for policing these peoples.

Nor was there an equivalent of the Mounted Police on the American frontier. When the development of that frontier concerned Indians, the Americans employed their regular army as an agent of control; when a white community was involved it was generally left alone to solve its own problems. These two differing approaches to the problems of the American frontier were the result of historical processes. The Indians were pushed out of the way in the name of "manifest

destiny"; on Canada's northern frontier what exploitation there was did not require the displacement of the native population, so less violent methods of control could be employed. Similarly, the American laissez-faire attitude towards white frontier communities reflected a spirit of libertarianism which was older than the American Constitution; the paternalism which the Mounted Police brought to the white as well as the native communities of the northern frontier sprang from a very different tradition of sovereignty and authority.

Thus the work of the Mounted Police must be judged on its own terms. The conclusion as to the competence and significance of the police in the Yukon will serve for the rest of the northern frontier as well: what they enjoyed doing they did superlatively well; and even tasks they resented were generally performed as well as could be expected. To appreciate their contribution one need only speculate on the chaotic course northern history would likely have taken had not they, or a force like them, been sent to the northern frontier in the early stages of its development.

This dissertation, as all must do, leaves some questions unanswered. No attempt has been made to follow the history of the police on the northern frontier into the modern era, a period in which, with the advent of the extensive civil and military presence of the government in the north, the police relinquished much of their control

and influence. The study of this process must await the opening of relevant police and government archives. When the papers of the Hudson's Bay Company for the period under consideration are opened to scholars, still another view of the police involvement in the north will likely be revealed. Now that the native peoples of Canada are beginning to write their own history, one may hope for yet another perspective on the story presented here. Since the R.C.M.P. remain intimately concerned with the development of the Canadian north, one may also hope for future studies which will bring the present work up to date, so that the contribution of this remarkable force to this aspect of Canadian history may be more fully documented.

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APPENDIX A

On November 30th 1899 the police in the Yukon Territory, including some detachments in British Columbia, were distributed as follows:

Detachment	Men	Horses	Dogs
"H" Division			
Tagish	43	9	--
Stickeen	2	--	--
Dalton Trail	10	3	20
Dalton House	2	--	--
Skagway	1 (as an agent)	--	--
White Pass Summit	5	--	--
Lindeman	3	--	5
Bennett	7	2	--
Caribou	2	2	5
McClintock	1	--	5
White Horse	4	1	6
Upper Labarge	3	--	9
Lower Labarge	2	--	10
Hootalinqua	4	--	10
Big Salmon	4	--	11
Little Salmon	3	--	7
Tantalus	3	--	9
Five Fingers	4	--	9
Dog Camp	1	--	1
On Command	30	--	9
On Leave	2	--	--
Timber Camp	5	3	--
Herd	--	13	--
"B" Division			
Dawson Post	64	7	29
Dawson Town	11	--	--
Fort Constantine	2	--	4
Grand Forks	6	--	4
Indian River	3	--	4
Ogilvie	4	--	5
Half Way	2	--	10
Selwyn	2	--	10
Selkirk	2	--	12
Hotchiku	2	--	13
Stewart	3	--	12
Dominion Creek	4	--	5
Hunker Creek	5	--	5
On Command	.3	--	--
Total	254	40	231 [1]

1 N.W.M.P. Report 1899, II, B.

APPENDIX B

STRENGTH OF THE POLICE, 1903-1920

Year	Total--Canada	Yukon	Hudson Bay	Mackenzie Delta and Arctic Coast
1903	793	303	6	5
1904	810 1)	296	17	7
1905	813 1)	228	17	8
1906	684	141	16	7
1907	639	94	12	8
1908	649	79	21	7
1909	651	74 2)	16	7
1910	649	60 2)	12	7
1911	626	41	11	7
1912	654	36	10 3)	7
1913	763	45	10 3)	7
1914	1268	49	20 4)	7
1915	929	53	19 4)	7
1916	797	48	21 5)	5
1917	656	45	6 6)	7
1918	483	38	7 6)	6
1919	1600	49	6 6)	6 7)
1920	1671	50	6 6)	5 8)

1 Of these, 44 were detailed for the Peace River-Yukon trail in 1905, and 16 in 1906.
2 The two Yukon divisions were merged in 1910.
3 Detachment at Nelson opened.
4 Includes detachment at Baker Lake.
5 "M" Division abolished. The total comprises the detachments at Churchill and Nelson only.
6 At Fullerton and Port Nelson only.
7 Plus two at Coppermine River.
8 Plus two at Tree River (Port Epworth).

This table was complied from the police reports for the respective years. The totals are generally accurate for the end of September, but sometimes are for other months.

APPENDIX C

LIST OF SUPPLIES CARRIED BY THE FITZGERALD PATROL

Dried fruit	15	lbs.
Baking powder	6	"
Bacon	75	"
Beans	30	"
Butter	10	"
Coffee	5	"
Corned Beef	10	"
Flour	120	"
Lard	15	"
Milk	20	tins
Sugar	35	lbs.
Table salt	3	"
Tea	12	"
Smoking tobacco	12	"
Chewing tobacco	16	"
Matches	6	doz. packets
Candles	18	lbs.
Dog fish	900	" (i.e., fish for dog food)

R.N.W.M.P. Report 1911, V, p. 317.

APPENDIX D

THE BATHURST INLET PATROL

"M" Division, R.N.W.M.Police,
Bernard Harbour, Northwest Territories,
Dolphin and Union Straits,
June 16, 1917.

The Officer Commanding,
R.N.W.M.Police,
Port Nelson.

Sir,--I have the honour to forward to you a general report of a patrol made from Baker Lake, N.W.T., to Bernard Harbour on the Arctic Coast.

On March 21, 1917, I left Baker Lake Detachment with Reg. No. 4557 Sergt.-Major Caulkin, T.B., Police Naitves "Joe" and "By and Bye," and hired native "Quash-ak" and native woman Solomon, taking three teams of police dogs (25), sleds, and two canoes. . . . We proceeded west across Baker Lake, calling at our first cache, where we took up most of our supplies, and coal oil for the patrol. One month's rations for six were all we were able to leave with, as with all our camp equipment and coal oil we were heavily loaded. After the month's rations were finished we were to subsist as best we could . . .

On the morning of March 23 I sent Sergt.-Major Caulkin to a Kinipitoo encampment on the northwest end of the lake, and here he was able to purchase 10 large deer, and also to procure the services of a native with a dog-team to accompany us as far as Schultz lake and to assist in carrying our dog-feed and coal oil. . . .

The weather from March 21 to March 26 had been clear and cold, but on this latter date it commenced to storm and continued to do so till April 2, when we were able to break camp, proceeding to Aberdeen lake. . . . there found an encampment of Shan-ing-i-ong-muits and one Pad-i-muit family. We built our igloo alongside and camped with them. . . .

On April 10 our native guide and his son returned to their camp, and we were now alone in a strange country, with which none of my natives were acquainted, so we had to travel by compass and endeavour to pick our way as near as possible by this means. . . .

We finally came out on the Arctic coast on the night of May 7, and as far as I am able to judge from the map we hit the coast about 15 miles west of the mouth of the Ellis river. The river . . . is known to the natives as Coog-nay-ok, but this I did not find out until I got a copy of Hanbury's map at Bernard Harbour. . . .

On May 14 we saw several sled tracks going in a south-westerly direction towards Bathurst Inlet; these we followed

and eventually came upon a large Eskimo encampment situated on an island in the mouth of Bathrust inlet.

These natives were Killin-o-muits, and we were received in a very friendly manner, although we had to go through the formula of showing friendly intentions by extending the arms above the head upon approaching the camp, and our natives were soon engaged in conversation with them.

May 15 was spent in investigating the Radford and Street case, and we traded with these natives for footwear and seal-line, etc., our own being pretty well played out. We also traded and procured a native stone lamp and some blubber, but this method of cooking was so slow that after several attempts to boil a kettle, consisting of an all-night vigil, we eventually abandoned the lamp and found small twigs growing on the islands in the inlet, sufficient to make a small fire. . . .

From May 18 the travelling got very bad; the sea-ice became bare and jagged and cut the dogs' feet, so that the majority were lame. I had an outfit of sealskin boots made and put on all the dogs, but the ice was so sharp that they would wear out a pair in one night, as was also the case with our own footwear, and it was fortunate that we were constantly coming in contact with natives and able to trade for footgear and to get repairs made. . . .

At all these encampments I stayed and gave them a lecture on the murdering of the white men, and regarding pilfering from them and also dwelling on the laws of civilization generally. They appeared to be greatly impressed. They had heard of Inspector LaNauze's patrol in there and the taking out of the murderers of the Roman Catholic missionaries, and this seems to have created a great impression amongst them, the extent of which remains to be seen in the future. . . .

We reached Tree river on the night of June 4 . . . At this point we traded for some barren ground grizzly bear meat from the natives and were made very sick from eating it; although the meat tasted pretty good there was something about it that was not good for the stomach. . . .

We reached Bernard harbour on June 13 and were met by Mr. Phillips, post manager of the Hudson's Bay Company, who showed us every kindness and assisted us in every way possible.

Mr. Phillips informed me that it would be impossible to proceed farther west by sled as the breakup was liable to occur any time now, and that if I attempted it I would get stranded somewhere along the coast. He further informed me that the Hudson's Bay Company boat would arrive as soon as the ice cleared and that our best way out was to go out on her to Herschel island. This I decided to do . . .

It is needless to say that this was a hard trip, for I must say that it has been the hardest trip I have ever made, and we suffered much from cold and exposure. These we felt all the more when our supplies ran out and when

towards the end of our journey our deerskin clothing got the worse for wear and the hair started falling out and the winds pierced through the seams and holes.

Most of us were continually frozen about the face and hands, and with regard to snow blindness we were suffering from this more or less during the whole journey, the natives particularly showing a weakness in this direction even when wearing snow glasses, which I must say was due to the inferior quality of our glasses, but which were the best I could procure before we started.

Both myself and Sergt.-Major Caulkin were in very poor shape as regards health; this was undoubtedly due to the straight meat diet which we had been on for the past month or six weeks, eating only quantities of deer, seal and bearmeat, to which we were unused, and even this eaten mostly half raw ever since the time of our being out of coal oil for out lamps. . . .

Dogs: . . . our dogs kept in good travelling shape and at no time did they show signs of becoming leg weary until the last stages of our journey. This was unavoidable when taking the heat of the sun, long hours of travelling and the sharp ice passed over into consideration, although even with these to our disadvantage our dogs all stayed in harness to the finish, and we did not have one casualty. This I think is remarkable when one considers the length and conditions of the patrol generally. . . .

Game: . . . Our total kill of deer during the journey from Schultz lake, where we first came into contact with them, was 168, and these were used for dog-feed and our own consumption.

Also in the vicinity of Bathurst inlet and along the Arctic coast to Bernard harbour we had shot nineteen seals up to the time of our arrival here.

Natives: . . . Some of the Killin-e-muits had not seen a white man before, and had very few white men's goods in their possession . . . Most of their arrow heads were made of bone or native copper which they obtain in Bathurst inlet. Those natives appeared very clean, seemed industrious, and well clothed, and the men were tall and of fine physique. . . .

Some natives I met I did not like the looks of, and these were the Wad-le-ar-ing-muits of the Coppermine river; they were altogether too familiar, and I do not think they would hesitate to try to take advantage of a lone white man travelling amongst them. It was from this particular tribe that the murderers of the two Roman Catholic missioners hail. I gave them a long lecture respecting our laws. . . . from different sources I found out that it is correct that they do away with the majority of female born babies. I lectured them severely on this matter . . . steps should be taken to stop this practice as the result is that polyandry is now resorted to among them, and I noticed a huge number of marriageable huskies who were without wives. . . .

White settlers: We met no white settlers during our journey until reaching Tree river on the Arctic Coast on June 4, when we met one, Albin Kihlman, a Norwegian engaged in fishing and trapping. . . .

The next white persons we met were Capt. Bernard and one of his crew on the schooner Teddy Bear, frozen in the ice east of the mouth of the Coppermine River. Capt. Bernard had arrived in from Nome, Alaska in the previous summer (1916) and was engaged in trading with the natives for furs and curios . . .

Topographical: . . . The south shore of Melville sound is very high and rugged and barren, and the sound itself is strewn with islands. The south end of Bathurst inlet is altogether different from the maps in our possession, the shore line being a great deal more indented with bays and small inlets than what these maps show. . . . In the mouth of Bathrust inlet and in the inlet itself there are a great many more islands than are charted; these islands are mostly very high and nearly all have perpendicular cliffs, from 200 to 500 feet high. . . .

Natives in police employ: . . . The native woman was also of great assistance to us on the travel, mending our clothes at night and keeping them generally in repair. She was also of great assistance to us when we came in contact with the Killin-e-muits who were responsible for the murders of Messrs. Radford and Street, as she herself belongs to this tribe. . . .

I have the honour to be, sir,
Your obedient servant,
F.H. French, Inspector,
O.C. Bathurst Inlet Patrol.

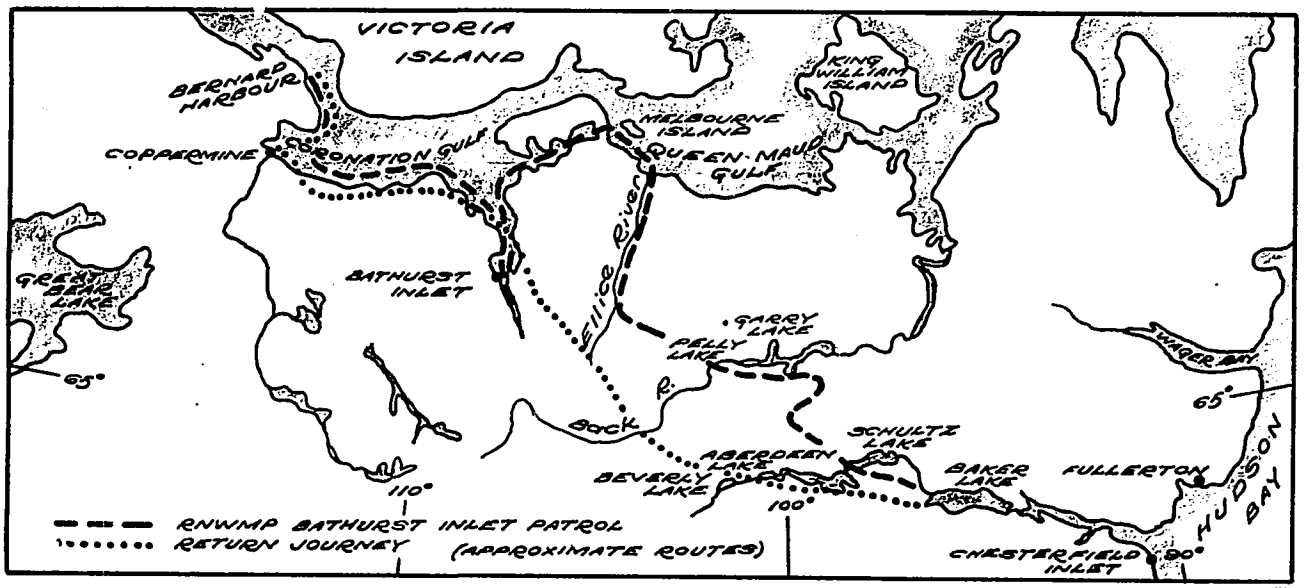
The Officer Commanding
R.N.W.M.Police,
Prince Albert, Sask.

Forwarded,
W.J. Beyts, Inspector,
Commanding Hudson's Bay Subdistrict,
Port Nelson, Man., 20-3-18.

The Commissioner: forwarded for his information.
W.H. Routledge, Supt.,
Commanding "F" Division,
Prince Albert, 20-5-18.

This extract is taken from R.N.W.M.P. Report 1918, A, pp. 7-18. The party did not go to Herschel Island as planned, but returned to Baker Lake in the next winter. Insp. French was subsequently awarded the Imperial Service Order; Sergeant-Major Caulkin was given the King's Police Medal.

Map VI.



Route of the Bathurst Inlet Patrol, 1917-1918.
From I.S. Anderson, "Bathurst Inlet Patrol,"
The Beaver, Spring 1972.

APPENDIX E

MEMO RE NORTHERN ISLANDS

Prepared for the information of a meeting of the Technical Advisory Board, November 10th 1920.

However, it is the east coast that calls for more extensive efforts of occupation and administration. Baffin Island is the largest island in the Archipelago. On the southern part there is a considerable Eskimo population and quite a number of Church of England Missions as well as several Hudson Bay and other trading posts. There are no Mounted Police stations on the island. Apparently any authority exercised is that exercised by the Hudson Bay officers. It is suggested that a Mounted Police station should be established this spring on the southern part of Baffin Island. This in conjunction with the lease which the Government has granted to the Hudson Bay Company of a considerable portion of Baffin Land and the acts of occupation that are now following the granting of this lease should be sufficient for the present to validate Canada's claims of sovereignty.

This station could be established by using the Hudson Bay boat or a Government Customs boat.

Insofar as the islands farther north are concerned there should be a special expedition. It is considered important that a Mounted Police station should be established on Bylot Island; another on north Devon Island; one on the south end of Ellesmere land; one on Ellesmere island in the vicinity of Cape Sabine and probably an additional one towards the north end of Ellesmere island. If this series of police stations is established it will effectually close up what might be called the front door of the Arctic Archipelago. This is especially true if the police stations on Bylot, North Devon and the south end of Ellesmere Island are instructed to deal with Lancaster and Jones Sounds as Territorial waters in the event of any foreign ships attempting to enter these passages.

Axel Heibergs Land and the Ringnes Islands were discovered by Sverdrup and declared the property of the King of Norway. As these islands lie entirely to the west of the islands on which it is suggested mounted police stations should be established and as the Norwegians have not established or validated their claims by occupation and administration there would not appear to be any pressing necessity for action in regard to them for the present. However it is suggested that the Mounted Police should gradually extend their administrative acts to cover these areas.

The occupation which it is suggested should be established during the coming summer will necessarily only constitute a first step. They will have to be continuously maintained to guarantee Canadian sovereignty. It is sug-

gested that one of the first steps to be taken after normal occupation, is an intensive examination of the islands occupied with a view to ascertaining their mineral and other wealth. In the course of a few years this plan will establish definitely whether it is worthwhile to continue occupation from a purely commercial standpoint. Any examination made of the country should be made not simply from a scientific standpoint but chiefly from a commercial standpoint.

From the first the Mounted Police officers sent to the North should in addition be appointed Customs officers and Immigration officers. Moreover at each station opened a post office should be formally established. It has been pointed out by Sir Joseph Pope that the establishment and maintenance of a post office is a high act of administration.

Eventually if investigation shows that there are important natural resources in the Northern islands the Government should transfer Eskimos from other Canadian areas to establish small centres of population; should induce trading companies to extend their operations to the islands . . .

Another subject that should be given consideration is the establishment of an air ship station in the vicinity of Edmonton or MacMurray from which, during the summer season, some of the air ships which have been donated by the Imperial Government to Canada could make cruises over all the northern islands. Such air ships could provide communication with the established stations and keep the country thoroughly informed as to what is going on in the north.

In view of the circumstances suggesting that Denmark was perhaps endeavouring to establish its authority in Ellesmere land the Committee gave careful consideration to the question of steps to be taken to definitely establish Canadian authority during the present year. It was found unfortunately that expeditions leaving the south after the early part of October could not reach Ellesmere land before the freeze-up. It is therefore impossible to do anything in connection with an expedition this year. If any further evidence is secured indicating that Denmark is engaged in efforts of occupation on Ellesmere land there is a method by which Mounted Police could be placed on that island sometime in January. The method to be followed is the sending of an air ship from the Imperial Air Station in the north of Scotland to Ellesmere land. The direct distance is only about 2200 miles; though in sailing it is likely that a direct route could not be followed on account of the high mountains in Greenland. The large air ships have a cruising of 6000 miles so there would be no unsurmountable difficulty in the way of an air ship sailing from Scotland dropping men and supplies by parachute and returning to Scotland. Such an expedition however could not be

undertaken until some time in January owing to the perpetual night season in the Arctic . . .

The most important action for the Government to take however is to arrange for an expedition for next summer to carry out the various acts of occupation which have previously been referred to. For this purpose the Government steamer "Arctic" is available. For some years it has been used as a light ship on the St. Lawrence and to put it in running order would cost it is estimated by the Naval Department about $35,000.

Harkin Papers, v. 1.